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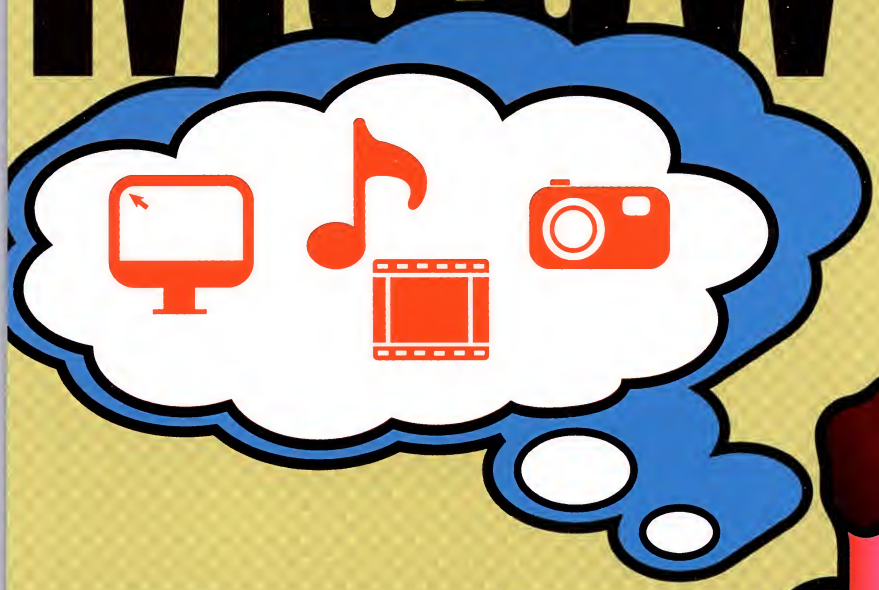

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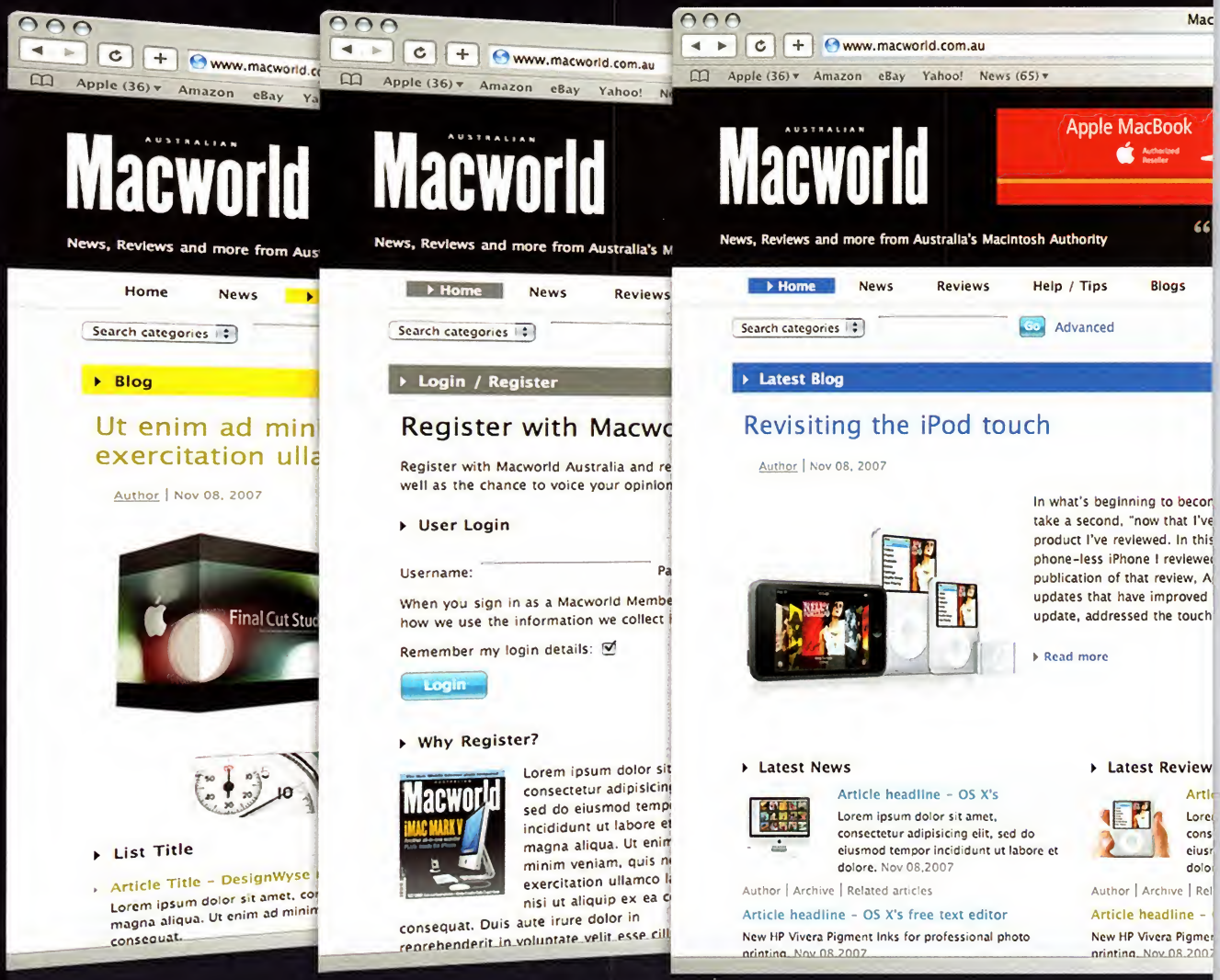

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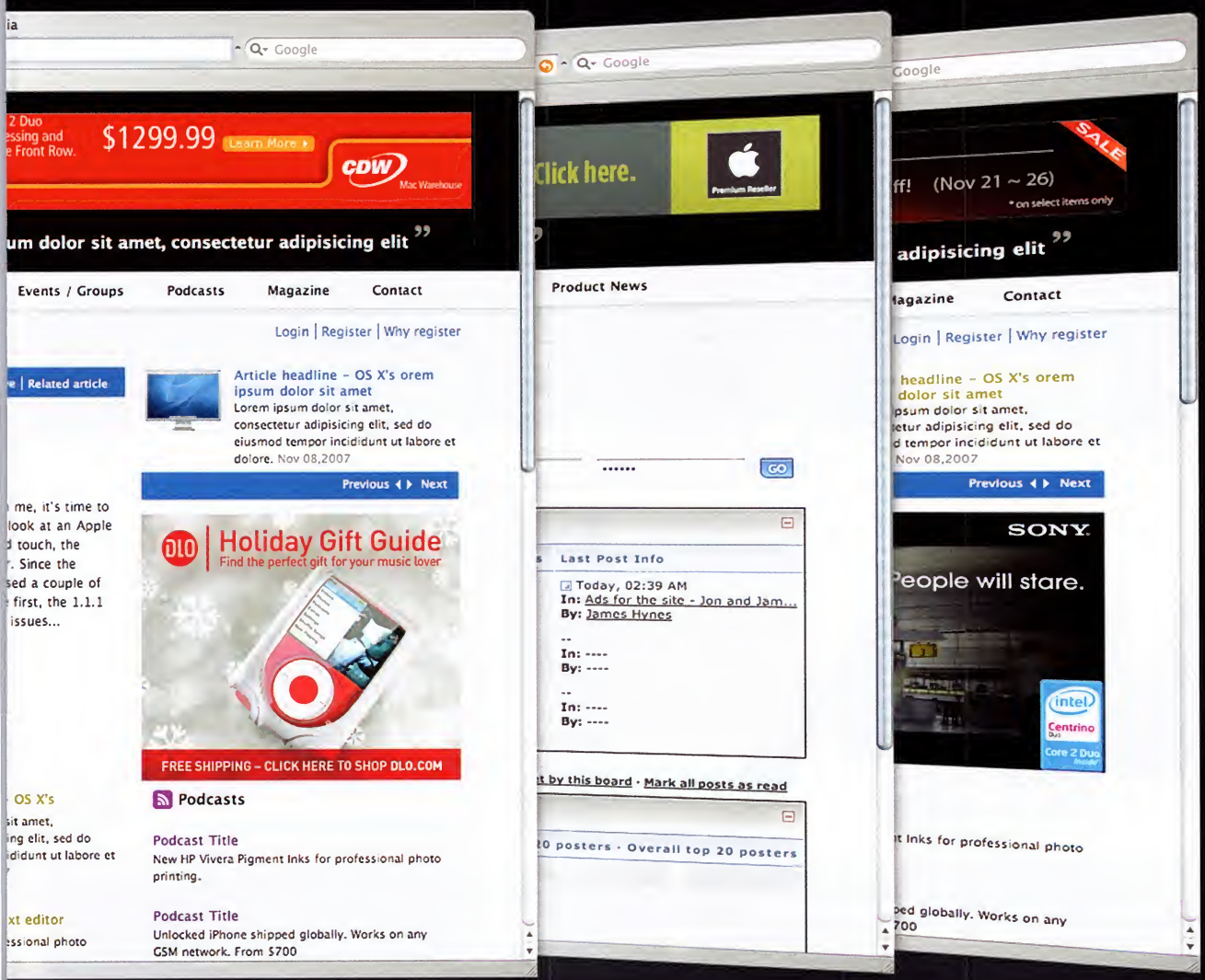

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The heart of your Time Machine

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★★★★★

Buffalo LinkStation Live 320GB
★★★★½

Maxtor One Touch 4plus 500GB
★★★★½

LaCie Ethernet Disk mini 500GB
★★★★½

Taurus LAN 640GB
★★★★½

Taurus RAID 640GB
★★★★½

068 Ableton Live LE 6

Ideal workstation for live performers
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069 Logic Studio

Easier to use, more playable
★★★★½

072 Updated MacBooks

Better overall performance and gaming

MacBook Core 2 Duo/2GHz
★★★★½

MacBook Core 2 Duo/2.2GHz (white)
★★★★½

MacBook Core 2 Duo/2.2GHz (black)
★★★★½

074 Canon Selphy CP740

Decent photos, but otherwise limited
★★★

075 Ai-Phone U-401M

What a difference an A makes
★★★½

076 Panasonic Lumix DMC-L10

Great pics in anyone's hands
★★★★½

076 Ricoh Caplio R7

More than meets the eye
★★★½

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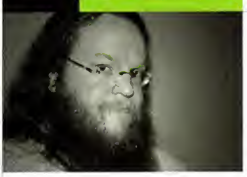

Matthew JC. Powell has a deep and abiding passion for the Mac, the magazine and its readers — in no particular order.

Patently obvious

According to legend, Charles H. Duell, then the US Commissioner of patents, said in 1899 that "everything that can be invented has been invented," and suggested that the Patent Office should be closed — having served its every possible purpose.

The quote is apocryphal, but I'm becoming more and more inclined to agree with it — I think the US Patent and Trademark Office, as it is now known, has served its purpose and probably ought to go away.

Why do I think this? Because it makes it far too easy for people to patent incredibly vague notions, then wait for someone much cleverer to come along and actually bring a product to market — lawsuit ensues.

Take, for example, the current suit brought against Apple and AT&T by Klausner Technologies, a company which appears to exist for the purpose of patenting neat ideas then waiting for someone to sue. Jonah Klausner, the founder of the company, claims not only that Apple and AT&T stole his ideas for the Visual Voicemail feature of the iPhone, but indeed that Apple has a history of exploiting his ideas. He reckons the Newton was based on a 1978 patent of his. To save you looking it up, here is US Patent 4117542:

"An electronic pocket directory is of a size and shape to fit in a user's pocket and resembles an electronic pocket calculator in size and appearance. It comprises a case containing read only memory circuit means for programming operation of the instrument and read/write circuit means dedicated to storing and retrieving telephone numbers, street addresses, appointments and agenda. A keyboard on the case comprises alphanumeric keys for numerals 1 to 0 and letters A to Z together with function keys for inputting and fetching the stored information. The information is retrieved visually by means of an alphanumeric display having a capacity of at least 10 and preferably at least 12 letters or numbers and audibly by means of an audio system. The audio system also includes means for producing an audio signal at any preset time, for example to call attention to an appointment and means for producing telephone dialling tones whereby tones representing telephone numbers can be fed directly into the telephone system. The instrument further includes calculating circuit means for performing mathematical calculations and time keeping means for displaying current time and for presetting future times for agenda and appointments. A further feature is a computer definable keyboard in which keys of the keyboard bear indicia defined by visual display means, for example LEDs or LCDs which are controlled by computer or other circuitry in the instrument so that the indicia are changed according to the mode of operation or the function being performed."

You all remember Mr Klausner's revolutionary device, I'm sure. No? Well surely you've all used various versions of his visual voicemail system — he claims that Apple and AT&T have robbed him of $US360 million in revenue by pinching the idea, so surely it must be widely used.

Poppycock! Excuse my language, I get carried away sometimes.

The patent above bears only coincidental resemblance to Apple's Newton MessagePad and in fact includes numerous obvious differences. Likewise the patents he cites in the iPhone suit (5572576 and 5283818 — I'll let you look them up) are no more than table napkin sketches of the "wouldn't it be neat if they made …" variety.

Such things shouldn't be defensible in court. For the most part they aren't, but frivolous lawsuits take time and they take money and quite often companies will settle just to avoid wastage of resources. Those costs are absorbed into the company's operating expenses and eventually passed on to you and me.

Kudos to Mr Klausner for having the gumption to patent every vague idea he's ever had, but I don't want to pay him for it. I'm happier to pay someone who went on to work out how it could all be done and — better yet — brought it to market so I could buy one. That's enterprise that deserves reward.

Brickbats to the US PTO for letting Mr Klausner and thousands of people like him file patents on the blindingly obvious, heading off genuine innovators at the pass by anticipating the kinds of things that smart people might make one day and forcing them to pay for the privilege of invention. It seems to me this runs directly counter to the purpose that the Office is supposed to serve.

Or is that just too obvious?

Matthew Jr. Powell

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Until the 01.2008 issue, Conexus (02 9975 2799) is giving a set of JBL Reference 200 headphones valued at $140 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in what we deem to be the most interesting letter.

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Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Command – V, 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the Reference 220 prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

Reference 220 letter of the month

TRIPPY, DUDE

Leopard arrived recently, and a short time later, for.Mac subscribers, along came "Back to my Mac". This allows remote access to another Mac, providing both are running Leopard. And very impressive it is too, allowing access to files, file transfer, and through Screen Sharing allows applications to be opened and managed. As an exercise I was able to have the remote Mac ring my laptop on Skype.

One thing to be avoided is screen sharing with a Mac that is already screen sharing with you. A very weird outcome indeed, and almost impossible to regain control of either. The result is illustrated below.

Ian Sale
Hobart, Tasmania

Thanks for the warning, Ian — it made me want to try it immediately. Cool. — M.JC.P.

APPLECARES

My MacBook Pro (Feb 2006), which is covered by AppleCare, suffered a failure of the optical drive. I took it to the helpful people at the Laptop Centre in North Sydney on fifth November and they requested a new drive. According to Apple this was sent out on sixth November but in a typical TNT debacle never arrived at the Laptop Centre.

Following numerous calls to the Laptop Centre, by the afternoon of Wednesday 14th my patience was wearing rather thin and I called Apple. After getting passed through two very polite service personnel I was connected with the similarly polite Kevin who seemed to sympathise with my view that I had paid Apple for service, which I expected them to provide, and that any problems they might have with their service agents or couriers were them not me to sort out. I was promised a call back later Wednesday or Thursday.

After that things actually looked up. I received an e-mail from a friendly computer requesting that I fill in a survey about my recent experience with their support organisation. As you can imagine I did not hold back, making it clear that I was very dissatisfied.

Things have continued to get better. I have received a call from Kevin this morning saying another drive is being dispatched to the Laptop Centre ASAP and my machine should be fixed promptly. It will still have taken two weeks to replace a faulty part for which Apple had a replacement in stock. Not good Steve.

So it does look as if customer service at Apple Australia is looking up. It would be hard for it not to improve from the abysmal state of the past. However, there is clearly a way to go. Why does it take nearly 48 hours to make the obvious decision to send out another $100 part and stop messing the customer about?

Bill Northcott
via internet

The letter we printed last month about one customer's experience with Apple and NextByte prompted a flood of letters in sympathy (some of which were on Next Byte's side, incidentally). Rather than print them and turn this section into a battleground I thought I'd just print this one, which says good things about a different service centre. NextByte has taken us up on the offer of a right of reply to last month's letter, but its response was not received in time for this issue. — M.JC.P.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Mentor letter of the month 1. Instructions on how to enter form part of these conditions of entry. 2. To enter send tips or queries to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V". Entries will be judged by the editorial staff of *Australian Macworld*. The judges' decision in relation to any aspect of the competition is final and binding on every person who enters. No correspondence will be entered into. Chance plays no part in determining the winner(s). Each entry will be individually judged based on its degree of interest. 4. Employees, their immediate families and agencies associated with this competition are not permitted to enter. 5. The Promoter accepts no responsibility for late or misdirected entries. 6. The best entry/entries as determined by the judges will win the prize(s). 7. The Promoter is neither responsible nor liable for any change in the value of the prize occurring between the publish date and the date the prize(s) is claimed. 8. The prize(s) is not transferable and will not be exchanged for cash. 9. The winner(s) will be notified by mail. 10. All entries become the property of the Promoter. 11. The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this competition is governed by the Privacy Notice 12. The Promoter is Niche Media Pty Ltd of 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 Ph 03 9525 5566, (ABN 13 064 613 529).

LEOPARD NIT-PICKING

Can't move files from a Cover Flow view Finder window to another Cover Flow view Finder window? Ah ... yes you can.

Are you actually going to be so persnickety that you're going to undermine the value of the Cover Flow view because you have to drag the file from the Cover Flow window partition of one window to the file list window partition of another? Talk about clutching for straws.

And what's with Ihnatko on the menu bar translucency? "It's ugly and makes a critical part of the UI harder to see and use."

Oh, hang on. I kinda understand his disappointment. I remember when my wife put one of those eco-friendly fluoro globes in the toilet. Couldn't wipe my arse for days for lack of illumination. Or that time there was a blackout when we were having dinner. Couldn't find the plate or my mouth.

Seriously now, here's how simple it is. The menu bar is at the top of the display. It's that simple. And if Andy's having such a dreadful time with what might be a ten per cent degree of translucency, well ... I can only recommend the AMA's list of accredited optometrists.

I don't see the point of the menu bar translucency, either, but to say it undermines the user experience is a ridiculous claim.

Chris Oaten
via internet

Yes, Chris, I'm going to be that persnickety. If I ask you to put a piece of paper in a folder on my desk, and you try to put that piece of paper in that folder and are repeatedly foiled, you will be little consoled when I explain that the way to do it is to put the piece of paper in the top drawer, at which point it will appear in the folder on the desk — it makes no sense. Folders in the Cover Flow view look like folder icons but aren't, and that's just wrong.

The translucency thing is subjective, as are so many things. Some people are finding that with particular background images in particular apps the menu bar becomes difficult to read. Given you don't gain anything with the translucency, why lose something — even if it's not much? — M.JC.P.

REGION CODE REDUX

In regards to Region coding of DVD drives (Mailbox, recent issues), I'm surprised that nobody has made mention of the fact that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has warned that DVD players that enforce region coding may violate the Trade Practices Act (see "Hotlinks").

Though this is for stand-alone players, I see no reason that computers should be any different. Particularly laptops, which are designed to travel to different regions.

Mark Seabrook
St Kilda, Victoria

I couldn't agree with you more, Mark, which is why I printed that link to Region X a couple of issues back and why I recommend to anyone who has that need to find region X, but install at your own risk as it involves mucking about with firmware. Region coding is a silly system designed for nothing other than allowing Hollywood studios to control the distribution of their products regardless of the wishes of the market. The companies behind HD-DVD have recognised this, which is why HD-DVD doesn't include region coding. Not coincidentally, most of the studios haven't signed on to HD-DVD, but are backing Blu-ray Disc, which does include region coding. Let the market decide. — M.JC.P.

Hotlinks

www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/87605
ACCC concerns over region coding

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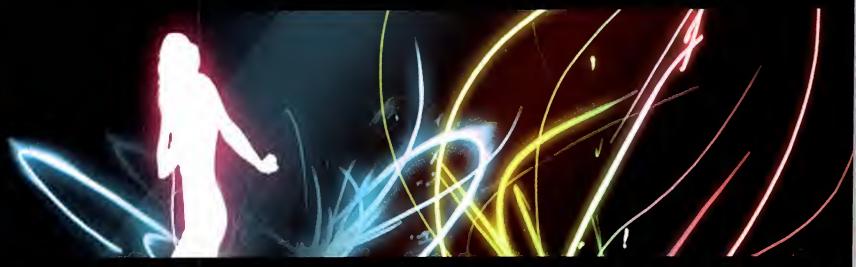

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Apple, AT&T named in visual voicemail lawsuit

KLAUSNER Technologies announced in early December that it has filed a patent lawsuit against Apple and AT&T for selling the iPhone. Klausner claims the iPhone infringes upon its existing patents, and estimates the damages and royalties at $US360 million.

The suit was filed in United States District Court, in the Eastern District of Texas and also names Comcast, Cablevision and Skype, companies that Klausner Technologies alleges have also violated the same patents as Apple and AT&T, but not because of the iPhone – because of similar features those companies offer to their customers.

Klausner Technologies cites its US Patents 5,572,576 and 5,283,818, separately granted in 1994 and 1996, which describe a "telephone answering device linking displayed data with recorded audio message". The company has previously sued Time Warner's America Online (AOL) and Vonage Holdings for infringing on these copyrights. Klausner later settled with those other companies and has licensed its patents to them.

Visual Voicemail, a feature of the iPhone, enables users to identify and listen to messages in their voicemail selectively by using the iPhone's interface. The phone identifies callers and when they left their message – users can then listen to each message individually, rather than having to use key commands to fast-forward, rewind, stop and start messages as they do with many other phones.

In one of the television advertisements for the iPhone, user "Doug" pithily describes visual voicemail as "One of the greatest advancements in the history of mankind, without question".

Klausner Technologies was founded by Judah Klausner, who claims to have invented the Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) and electronic organiser. Klausner claims that Apple's Newton PDA was covered under an OEM patent license granted twenty years ago under his patent 4,117,542.

An Apple spokesperson contacted for this story indicated that Apple does not comment about pending litigation.

Who else is suing Apple? When you're a large company like Apple, lawsuits are just a part of doing business. Apple's recent quarterly filing noted five outstanding lawsuits – not including the iPhone one above. Here's just a couple of the others:

Case one. David Bitton, a law student in Montreal, filed a class-action motion in Quebec Superior Court when he discovered that his new 8GB iPod nano really only had 7.45GB of space.

Does it have merit? Apple explains on iPod boxes and its web site that the actual formatted capacity of iPod is less than the full amount. Yet hard-drive maker Seagate recently settled a lawsuit about advertised versus actual capacity, offering five percent cash back or a free software bundle to those people who had purchased its hard drives during a six-year period.

Case two. California resident Timothy Smith filed a class-action suit against Apple, alleging that the company has violated antitrust law with the iPhone by prohibiting its use with carriers other than AT&T (and by bricking – or disabling – the phones of those who unlocked them themselves). The suit is asking the court for an injunction against Apple to keep the company from selling the iPhone with any sort of software lock that limits its use to AT&T's wireless network.

Does it have merit? Smith's attorney says Apple is in violation of the Cartwright Act, a California antitrust law that makes it illegal to restrict commerce, prevent competition, or enter agreements to lessen competition. Does locking the iPhone to AT&T's network fall under that definition? Hard to say, but Apple isn't the only company to sell phones locked to a particular carrier. —

Peter Cohen and Jonathan Seff

[HARDWARE]

Hotlinks

www.apple.com/au/macbookpro

For a few dollars more

MacBook Pro updated

ON the same day Apple boosted the processor speeds and made other internal changes to its MacBook line, it also announced the availability of a new, faster 2.6GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor for the MacBook Pro. The 2.6GHz processor is a $360 upgrade for the models that ship with the 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo. It should come as no surprise that this custom-built MacBook Pro is the fastest portable Mac to date.

Apart from the processor, the customised MacBook Pro shares the same tech specs as the high-end laptop models introduced in June. In the case of the 15-inch MacBook Pro we used in our testing (see the MacBook speed test on page 73 for more info), that means a 160GB hard drive and an Nvidia GeForce 8600M GT graphics processor.

The 2.6GHz MacBook Pro showed about a five-percent performance boost over the 2.4GHz in our Speedmark 5 benchmark. That's a little bit less than the eight-percent difference in clock speed, but the tests that make up Speedmark measure more than just processor performance.

In processor-intensive tasks, like rendering a scene in Cinema4D, the 2.6GHz MacBook Pro beat the 2.4GHz model by more than seven percent. In other tests, the 2.6GHz system was faster across the board, though by margins closer to the five-percent range.

We don't mouse-rate build-to-order models, but hopefully these results will help you decide if the extra processing power is worth the price when compared to Apple's standard MacBook Pro offerings.

– James Galbraith

Hotlinks

www.apple.com/au/iwork
www.microsoft.com/mac
iWork versus Office

Productivity suites face off

APPLE'S iWork '08 includes improved word-processing and presentation tools, as well as a new spreadsheet program – closing in (at least on paper) on Microsoft's Office suite. According to research data from NPD Group, Microsoft has little to fear for its January 15, 2008, release of Office 2008.

NPD's data shows that iWork currently holds 16 percent of all office productivity program sales, with Microsoft taking the rest. Although the company calls that sales figure a "success for Apple," NPD doesn't feel the number will be sustainable after the Office launch.

"A lot of customers are happy with their version of Office," says Chris Swenson, the director of software industry analysis at NPD Group. "That doesn't mean iWork isn't doing well, but it's hard to displace Office, which has been there for so many years."

Tim Bajarin, the president of consulting firm Creative Strategies, agrees. "If you look at Office," he says, "it's still pretty entrenched" among business and education users.

With cross-platform concerns a primary issue, for example, many businesses don't consider alternatives to Office and don't care much about the price difference.

"It's not so much about buying a cheap product or buying Office," says Swenson. "It's whether I keep using the existing version of Office or upgrade – Microsoft is essentially competing against itself."

The areas where price is a factor are with students, home users, and small businesses. However, Swenson says, Microsoft does a good job of cutting the prices of these versions of Office at critical selling times to maximise sales. — *Jim Dalrymple and Philip Michaels*

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Mbox goes micro

ONE of the major criticisms levelled against Pro Tools is the need for hardware in order to even launch the application – the only exception was Pro Tools Free which ran on Mac OS 9. The release of the Mbox 2 Micro doesn't eliminate that criticism, but it minimises it.

The Micro is the size of a traditional USB thumb drive and has a 1/8-inch stereo output and a volume wheel. Note the emphasis on output – there's no audio input on this unit so your sounds will need to be on your Mac's hard drive. Pro Tools LE and the usual Bomb Factory and DigiRack plug-ins are bundled. If you're a Pro Tools devotee and have the need to edit or mix Pro Tools sessions on a laptop or Mac with no attached audio hardware, the Micro is likely to be a must-have. This is also an economical way to explore Pro Tools as a new user. $395 is the retail price, and distributor is Digidesign Australia on 1300 734454.

While we're talking Digidesign, the company states that Pro Tools "will not function" under Leopard. The reality is a little greyer – I can use Pro Tools LE 7.3.1 fine on my Leopard installation, but upgrade at your own risk. At time of writing there was still not confirmation of when a compatibility update would be delivered – it's likely to be a month or two on previous form. *— David Holloway*

Hotlinks
www.korg.com
They call me MR

Korg MR-1

I'M a hardened gear junkie but I have to admit being smitten with the Korg MR-1. It's a portable recorder the size of an iPod but packs professional recording capability. It utilises one-bit recording, which is commonly called Direct Stream Digital (DSD) and is the underpinning of the SACD format. For the layperson all this means is very high quality recording. It has a 20GB internal hard drive which gives you six hours recording time at 1-bit 2.8224MHz stereo or 30 hours at CD-quality (16-bit 44.1KHz) . For six hours you'll need to use the supplied AC adapter – the MR-1's rechargeable battery gives you around 2.5 hours recording time. The bundled AudioGate software makes conversion of your files simple and also allows real-time conversion and playback. Audio inputs are dual balanced mini plugs and a stereo electret condenser mic is supplied. A stereo mini plug output, headphone output and USB 2.0 port round out the connectivity options. If you record audio in the field, have a very close look at this unit. The MR-1 retails for $1300 and Musiclink is the distributor on 03 9765 6565.

— David Holloway

[USERS AND GROUPS]

MUG activities for January 2008

Not many user groups meet during the hot summer months, so this is a shortish list. As always, if you have a group that isn't listed here, drop a line to matthew.powell@niche.com.au — Nicholas Pyers

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www.clubmac.org.au
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www.shcug.org.au
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www.melbournecocoaheads.com
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www.apple-q.org.au
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www.shcug.org.au
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www.imug.com.au
Thu 24
Central Victorian Macintosh Users Inc — CVMU [VIC]
www.cvmu.net
Sat 26
Geraldton Macintosh User Group [WA]
www.gmug.org.au
Mon 28
Southern Highlands Macintosh Users' Group — SHMUG [NSW]
www.shcug.org.au

Hotlinks
www.vaf.com.au
Really big sound

iPod Gizmo of the month

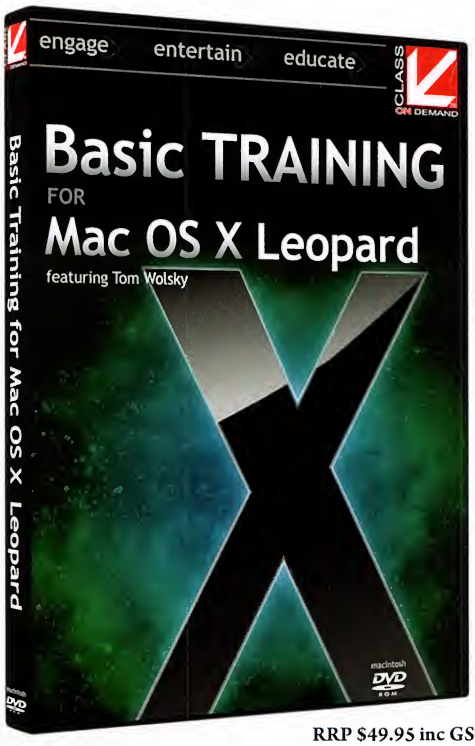
[IGOM]

OK, it's not quite a gizmo as such, but Adelaide-based VAF Research's Octavio 1 has to feature somewhere in the mag, and you can plug an iPod into it so there.

Calling the Octavio 1 an "iPod speaker" would be rather missing the point though. It's a real, genuine, full-on high-end speaker system – with an iPod dock. You can plug your hi-fi system into it as well, and chances are reasonable you'll get a better sound than you do out of your current set. If you've got a flat-screen TV but no room for a six-speaker setup, the Octavio fills a room more than admirably. And at $699 it's hard to beat the price for this quality.

In use, I was frankly amazed at the sound the Octavio could produce, even from digital files on an iPod. The bass sound in particular was astonishing from a unit this size. VAF's web site describes it as a "portable speaker system, presumably with a knowing wink. At 60cm×26cm×11cm and 11.6kg it's not exactly portable – once you've got it in place it's pretty well settled.

Plus, if you're into that kind of thing, it comes with several "skins" to suit your décor. Distribution is via Powermove on 03 9464 4999. — *Matthew JC. Powell*



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Peter Cohen's guide to EVE Online

First look: EVE Online

THE Mac hasn't exactly been inundated with commercial massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) over the years. Blizzard Entertainment's superlative World of Warcraft was the last big one, and that debuted in 2004.

EVE Online is an MMOG of a very different colour, and if you're looking for a game with incredibly deep and challenging game play, this is it. EVE Online makes World of Warcraft look like Minesweeper.

EVE Online has been a phenomenon on the PC since 2002, and has developed a small but incredibly loyal (and growing) base of subscribers since then. CCP Games, the game's developer, has been constantly refining and improving the game since its debut, and has finally turned its attention to platforms other than Windows. In 2007, CCP partnered with TransGaming to bring EVE Online to Intel-based Macs. And the result is absolutely spectacular.

All about EVE. So what is EVE Online? Superficially, it can be described as a space trading, exploration and combat game. You spend your entire time encapsulated in a spaceship capable of interplanetary flight, travelling from space station to space station. This will sound immediately familiar to Mac users who whiled away many hours playing the addictive Escape Velocity games from Ambrosia, and there are some comparisons. Both games owe more than just a nod to Elite, considered by many to be the great-granddaddy of space trading games of this ilk.

Zeroing in for the kill. Honing your combat skills is an important part of the EVE Online experience.

But EVE Online goes way beyond simply travelling from star system to star system, ferrying passengers and cargo and fighting off the advances of interstellar pirates. There's a player-driven economy that affects the prices you pay for commodities in the game, such as minerals and products you need to outfit your ships, ammunition, and more. It's possible to save yourself a lot of money by travelling to different systems where the prices of some commodities are much lower. (EVE Online's currency is called "isk" in the game, a nice little tongue-in-cheek nod to Icelandic developer CCP Games' native currency, krona, known in monetary market shorthand as "ISK.")

It's really the ultimate "sandbox" experience for online gaming — you can, if you wish, become a cargo pilot, shuttling vast quantities of material from system to system; a miner, extracting ores from asteroid belts, strip-mining entire systems of their precious metals; a battleship commander, sending swarms of fighters into battle in massive fleet attacks; or a pirate, hitting individual players, raiding their goods and leaving in a hurry. But you don't need to be a space pilot to succeed at EVE. You can also train to become an inventor or manufacturer of goods, selling precious items to the highest bidder. You can create a Corporation — the EVE Online equivalent to a World of Warcraft Guild (a collection of like-minded players with similar goals and aspirations) — and you can basically run your game from behind a desk.

First impressions. EVE Online is also a phenomenally pretty game. As you fly from system to system you're almost overwhelmed with glowing nebulas, the flare of far-off stars, the giant rings of nearby gas giants. There's a lot to look at in EVE, too. And it's going to get even prettier with a new upgrade called Trinity that's coming out for PC users later this year, and for Mac and Linux users in early 2008.

Is the Mac conversion perfect? I've spent less than a week with it, so I'm not ready to give it final judgment yet. I know that on my system, at least, it's been quite well-behaved, outside of some peculiarities with mouse control. I'll lose the cursor occasionally in Windowed mode, and not be able to get it back unless I switch to a different application.

It's the economy, stupid. EVE Online isn't just about flying around in space. You also can track economic trends, making money buying and selling goods, manufacturing and inventing.

I also know that a few people are having a bit of trouble. But one way or the other, I don't expect that any of this represents a show-stopper that means you shouldn't at least download EVE for yourself and give it a try.

EVE does require an Intel-based Mac with a non-integrated graphics chip. That means that if you're using a MacBook Pro, Intel iMac or Mac Pro, you're probably okay – but MacBook and Mac mini users might have some trouble.

I strongly recommend that MMOG players who have had enough of World of Warcraft and gamers looking for the logical successor to Elite and Escape Velocity should check out EVE Online, post-haste.

You can download a 14-day free trial that doesn't require a credit card to activate. After that, EVE will cost you $US19.95 for the first month, and $US14.95 for each month thereafter. And if you're hooked right away and want to save yourself some money, make sure to check out the EVE Online store where you can purchase game cards. — *Peter Cohen*

Sunset in space. EVE Online's visuals are stunning, such as this solar glare visible as this spacecraft warps away to its next destination.

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Hotlinks

www.apple.com/au/macosx
The Leopard enclosure

What's at stake with Leopard?

IT'S been more than two years since we've seen a major upgrade to Mac OS X, but Apple hasn't been sitting still in that time. The company has the most successful digital music player in the world and the largest online music store; it has transitioned its computers to Intel chips; its iPhone is changing the mobile phone market; and its software continues to pressure the competition. In the midst of all this success, just how important is a new Mac OS X release?

According to industry analysts, OS X 10.5 – Leopard – is a critical part of Apple's overall strategy and an important part of the company's other successes.

"Mac OS X is key to Apple's message of the integration of hardware, software, and services," says Ross Rubin, the director of analysis at market research firm NPD Group. "Given the focus on integration, it's easy to lose track of the components of that strategy. Without the Mac OS, the computer is just a pretty Windows machine."

JupiterResearch vice president and research director Michael Gartenberg agrees: "It isn't quite as flashy in a year that brought us new iPods and the iPhone, but it's no less important."

How do you measure success? Measuring the success of an operating system is not as easy as measuring the success of something like an iPod or an iPhone. While some people will purchase Leopard, others have waited to purchase a new computer with Leopard preinstalled. In that case, Leopard is a factor in the Mac buying decision, which makes tracking it much more difficult. All told, Apple says it sold two million copies of Leopard in the first weekend.

NPD's Rubin says there are a few ways to judge the success of an operating system. You can look at the sales of boxed retail copies. You can look at the percentage of the customer base that has upgraded after a certain period of time, which would include new hardware sales. Finally, you can look at the number of third-party developers that create programs to take advantage of the platform.

Looking at Apple's operating system sales historically offers some insight into how Leopard might fare in the next couple of months. According to NPD Group's retail point-of-sale data, looking at the first two months after each OS's release, Apple sold 30 percent more unit shipments of Tiger than it did of Mac OS X 10.3 Panther, and 100 percent more than 10.2 Jaguar.

Those numbers include only boxed copies, however, and don't take into account any version of the operating system that shipped on a desktop or laptop – and Apple is selling more Macs than ever. Also, Apple has a lot more retail locations now than it did during the launch of any previous operating system, giving users greater access to viewing and purchasing the software. On Leopard's October 26 release date, Apple Stores saw big crowds waiting to get their hands on the new OS.

Targeting Vista. Apple enjoys poking fun at Microsoft, pointing out how the Mac had many features long before Windows acquired them. While that's fun, everyone knows there is no way Leopard will outsell Vista. Microsoft enjoys a huge share of the market, and is upgrading businesses and selling directly to vendors who resell Vista to customers buying new computers. However, the comparison with Windows is still important for Apple.

"It's an obvious benchmark for [Apple] and it's one they allude to often," says Rubin. "This is an interesting upgrade because it's the first one to launch on Intel. There is a sense that the Intel transition made the Mac more attractive to Windows users – this upgrade really allows those users to experience a Mac upgrade for the first time."

For the most part, upgrading the operating system on a Mac is a pretty smooth process. Good or bad news with OS upgrades gets people talking – and the word of mouth could be good for Apple.

"Apple controls the hardware and technologies like FireWire, which helps when upgrading," says Rubin. "Generally, upgrading versions of the Mac OS has been far less complex than upgrading from, say, [Windows] XP to Vista."

How about the features? When it comes down to it, nobody is going to buy a piece of software just to put money in Apple's pocket. We all want some value for our $158, and analysts think that we're getting it with Leopard.

Some features, however, are there as much for show as for anything. Take the new Dock in Leopard – it doesn't really do anything different, but it looks different. That's important. When prospective customers walk through the door of an Apple retail store, they want to see right away that there are changes. The revised Dock and the 3D look-and-feel of the latest operating system offer one way to achieve that. "Visual changes are something that helps Apple long before it helps the users," says Rubin.

Gartenberg says appearance also helps distinguish OS X from Vista. "It was important for Apple to add features like Cover Flow and Time Machine that are visibly different than what you can get on Vista."

However, features like Time Machine are more than just flash and glitz – they actually do an important job. That's something to consider, with many Windows users coming over to the Mac after years on a PC. Time Machine is certainly a more intuitive and entertaining way of presenting data backup.

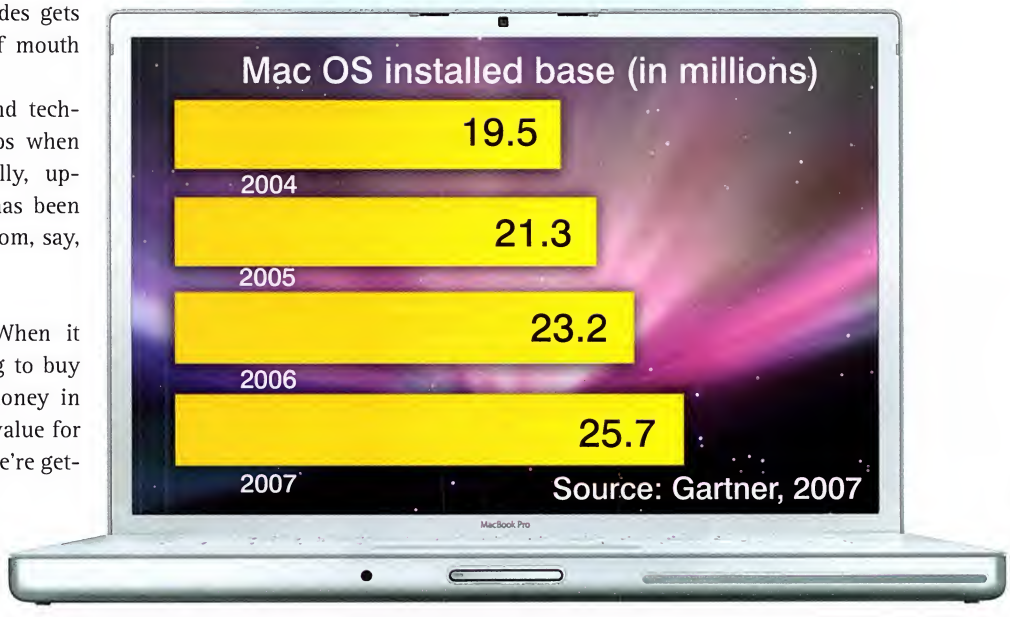
"Apple does a really good job of making very good and easy tools to attract users," says Forrester Research analyst J.P. Gownder. *— Jim Dalrymple*

Tech trends

Mac OS market share

Yes, at 95.7 percent, Windows still holds a commanding lead in the race for operating system market share — but research from Gartner shows that the Mac OS's installed base has grown by nearly one-third since 2004, though it lost a fraction of market share in the process. Perhaps Leopard will improve those numbers.

— Maryann Jones Thompson



Hotlinks
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First Look: Bento

WHEN Mac users need to create a database, they turn to FileMaker Pro more often than not. But for less complex tasks – cataloguing the media you own, managing contacts, or keeping tabs on a project – it's overkill.

FileMaker seems to recognise that dilemma. So it's created a database program in the vein of Apple's own iWork productivity suite (which, in itself, is hardly a surprising turn of events since FileMaker is an Apple subsidiary). The newly unveiled Bento is a lightweight personal database application that, at its core, is about making databases accessible and easy for the casual use

Bento is available as a free public preview in advance of its planned January 2008 release.

What Bento is. The developers at FileMaker realize that many casual users have similar needs and desires when it comes to creating databases, so they've provided more than 20 pre-built templates for information like Home Inventory, Digital Media, Classes, and more.

Getting started is as easy as picking a template or, if none of the included ones meet your needs, tailoring an existing template to your liking or creating one from scratch. FileMaker touts one-click customisation in Bento, which lets you adjust everything from text sizes to shading and alignment.

Bento's look, inspired by the likes of iTunes and iPhoto, will be familiar to most Mac users. The main window is divided into three columns: the left hand is a source list that holds your databases, which Bento calls "libraries," and their "collections," the Bento equivalent of playlists. Bento can link automatically into OS X's Address Book and iCal, letting you easily pull information from those sources to use in your other libraries; that information is also live, meaning that changes you make there will be reflected in Address Book and iCal. You can also create smart collections, akin to iTunes' smart playlists, which select a set of records based on criteria that you specify.

Everything in its place. Bento offers a number of pre-built templates to help you get a jump-start on building your personal database.

The middle column is Bento's main canvas, where you work with the content itself. At the top, a toolbar lets you toggle between different views: every library has a table view, which lets you look at your data in a spreadsheet-like fashion, and a form view, which lets you view, enter, and edit details about a particular record. You can create multiple form views for a library via a simple drag-and-drop interface.

In the right-hand column are the fields for the current library: for example, a database of contacts would include fields for name, address, e-mail, phone number, and so on. You can create new fields from any of 19 different included types, such as checkboxes, drop down menus, and text boxes. Adding a new field to a form view is as simple as dragging-and-dropping it. Bento even allows you to embed media like images, sounds, and videos into a record, though there is no direct integration with your iLife media.

What Bento isn't. While Bento puts a friendly face on databases, it comes at the sacrifice of some of the higher-end functionality. It's not an application for those wanting to do complex SQL queries or share a database over a network with multiple users.

Bento also stores its database in its own proprietary format, and while you can export to a plaintext Comma Separated Values format, you won't find any other means of exchanging information with common database programs like Microsoft Access, mySQL, or even FileMaker Pro.

You also, unfortunately, won't find any direct way to import databases you created in AppleWorks. Users of that venerable suite looking for a way to transition to the new world of iWork won't find it in Bento – at least not in version 1.

Pricing and availability. One major advantage Bento holds over its big brother FileMaker Pro is price – the current version of the venerable database program goes for $499 while a single copy of Bento will set you back just $79. A family pack of five licenses costs $129.

Because Bento leverages some of Leopard's new features – it only works on Mac OS X 10.5. That's true of the currently available preview, as well as the final release slated for January. — *Dan Moren*

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[MUSIC/MOBILE]

Hotlinks

ovi.nokia.com
It means "door" in Finnish

Nokia to launch music download service

NOKIA will launch a new service next year that allows people who buy certain Nokia phones to download music for free for a year after they purchase the device.

The company has signed a worldwide deal with Universal Music to offer the service and is in talks with other major labels, said Olli-Pekka Kallasvuo, Nokia's president and CEO, in a speech at the Nokia World conference in Amsterdam.

The service, called Comes with Music, will allow people to download as many songs as they want during the year after they buy the phone, and then keep the music after the year is up, Kallasvuo said.

He was joined by Lucian Grainge, chairman and CEO of Universal Music, who called the deal "a groundbreaking moment" for Universal. "There is no comparable service where music can be kept by the consumers even if their subscription lapses," he said.

The music industry has been criticised for complaining about illegal downloads while not doing enough to let people download music legally. Grainge said the deal with Nokia shows that Universal is "doing all we can to transform ourselves into a consumer-led business."

Nokia spokesman Kari Tuutti said the service will be offered initially with Nokia's high-end N series devices, but eventually will come to a broader range of Nokia handsets. People will be able to download the music to both their phone and their computer, he said.

The cost of the service will essentially absorbed in the initial purchase price of the phone, but Nokia isn't saying yet if consumers will be charged a premium for phones that come with the service. Nokia will pay a portion of the revenue from the phones to Universal, Tuutti said.

"The music industry is making money on this and we hope to make money from this also," Kallasvuo said.

The service combines the world's biggest phone maker with the world's biggest music label. It will put Nokia more squarely into competition with Apple, which operates its iTunes service, and Microsoft, which has its Zune music player and online store. Nokia didn't discuss what form of Digital Rights management, if any, would be imposed on the downloaded files.

The novel part of the Nokia service is that users can keep the songs after the one-year subscription period ends. That marks a new business model for the music industry, and goes a step further to loosening download restrictions imposed on users.

Universal's catalogue includes U2, Eminem, Amy Winehouse, Mariah Carey, Pavarotti and The Rolling Stones, Grainge said. Nokia may sign other labels by the time the service launches, scheduled for the second half of 2008.

Currently, Kallasvuo said, most people rip CDs from their existing music collection or download them from illegal services. Consumers need new services so that "the necessity, or the lure, of stealing music will go away," he said.

Comes with Music was one of several new services described at Nokia World. The company will also offer a service that lets people access files stored on their desktop computer from their mobile phone, or from a secure online server. To offer the service Nokia has bought a California start-up company, Avvenu, for an undisclosed sum.

It also described plans to expand its Ovi web site and turn it into a "personal dashboard" where users can manage and share digital photos and videos with friends, and access third-party services such as the Flickr photo service. — *James Niccolai*

[SHAREWARE]

Hotlinks

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Where to download shareware featured in AMW

A note about Off the net

NORMALLY this page would feature Dan Warne's shareware picks for the month. It's a popular feature of the mag, so don't panic – we haven't dropped it. With the dawn of our new web site we are, however, changing the way we provide this service to our readers as well as offering many more programs for download with our friends at Ausmac. You'll like the new system and the new look and of course the new web site – we hope so, anyway – but it wasn't quite ready at press time.

Look for a vastly improved Off the net in our February 2008 issue and check out our web site, which will be live by the time of the San Francisco Macworld Expo. — *Matthew JC. Powell*

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Dan Warne
remains passionate about the state of broadband in Australia.

Let's get naked

NO, seriously. Let's all get naked. In front of our computers.

I'm talking about the latest in broadband services, of course — get your mind out of the gutter. "Naked DSL" is the new-found ability to get broadband over your phone line without actually having to pay Telstra its monthly line rental tax.

With Naked DSL, your phone line is physically disconnected from Telstra's network and connected directly to your ISP's equipment, which (hopefully) has been installed into your local exchange. If you plug in and pick up a phone, you won't even get a dial-tone, because there literally is no phone service connected to the line. The only signals going down the line are the high-frequency broadband signals that can't be heard by the human ear.

In truth, you are still indirectly paying some line rental to Telstra — your ISP has to pay a rental each month to have full control over the copper wires into your house. But it's considerably less than retail phone line rental — about $14 per month.

This all boils down to much cheaper monthly prices for broadband. iiNet is the first major ISP to launch Naked DSL, and its plans start at $49.95 for 4GB of usage (2GB in peak hours and 2GB overnight). The bonus is unlimited phone calls to landlines nationwide using the iiNet VoIP service. Calls to mobiles still cost you money — but at 29c per minute with no flagfall fee, they're considerably cheaper than what the major telcos charge.

Other ISPs are planning to offer Naked DSL too. Amcom, a West Australian ISP with coverage mostly in WA but some areas of SA as well, is offering "naked lines" for $19.95 plus the regular price of their broadband plan, while national ISPs Internode, AAPT, TPG and South Australian ISP Adam Internet say they are also planning to offer naked DSL in 2008.

It's a pretty safe bet that any ISPs that currently have ADSL2+ offerings will provide naked DSL at some point sooner rather than later, since it substantially reduces the cost to the customer, and allows the ISPs to earn incremental revenue from VoIP calls.

Think you can't get ADSL?

All these new broadband deals are great — but they're not available to a lot of people.

Naked DSL may be able to help here too. Because your phone line is physically disconnected from Telstra's network, it is not subject to the same constraints as one that has an active phone service. The reason is that if you pump up the broadband signal too much, it can make your voice calls too soft to hear. But if there's no voice calls going down the line, then the rules need not apply.

Internode Managing Director Simon Hackett says his company is currently in testing with people who have been rejected from Telstra in the past when they've applied for ADSL, due to "transmission loss too high".

Mobile networks fighting back too. It's not just DSL providers that are engaging in fierce price competition — wireless broadband is continuing to become more and more attractive.

I've previously covered Virgin Broadband, which provides 4GB of usage for $60 including unlimited phone calls to landlines and Virgin mobiles nationwide. Unfortunately, Virgin has now chopped the deal in half, providing only 2GB usage (current customers are not affected).

However, Vodafone has stepped in, offering 5GB of wireless broadband for $39 per month, including a free USB modem if you sign up for 24 months. At the time of writing, this price was being offered as a special promotion during December 2007 only, but it seems likely that Vodafone will continue offering something similar after the Christmas rush has died down.

Optus has also revamped its wireless broadband pricing: $24.99 gets you 400MB or $39.99 gets you 2GB of wireless broadband over the telco's 3G/HSDPA network (being marketed by Optus as "Turbo G"). The catch is to get the good price you also need to have a mobile with Optus.

Of course, neither Vodafone nor Optus have the same coverage that Telstra's Next G network has, and as a result, you shouldn't expect Telstra to match the pricing with BigPond Wireless any time soon. Telstra knows that it can offer service in many places the other telcos can't, so there's no need for it to drop its prices to compete. As Telstra BigPond spokesman Craig Middleton once said to me, "This pricing reflects the fact that it's the best product on the market for wireless broadband. If you want to travel first class, you'll be prepared to pay more. If you want to travel on the bus with our competitors ..."

Hotlinks

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Anthony Caruana

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McAfee VirusScan for Mac 8.6 (beta)

MOBILE SECURITY

You're at your most vulnerable when you're out of the office. How do you communicate securely with your data at home base? What happens if your laptop gets stolen? We look at ways to protect your data from disasters, and to recover from them if they do happen.

Security – we all know we need it but many of us rarely give it more than a passing thought. As Mac users we sometimes look smugly at our Windows-using brethren and laugh at their inane spyware and anti-virus rituals. But are we really safe, or do we live under a veil of false security?

The truth is we are immune from some threats today, but we're not totally safe. There are some threats that are platform agnostic, such as phishing scams and theft. Also, just because there aren't any Mac viruses out there today that doesn't mean there won't be one tomorrow. As Apple's star continues to ascend it becomes an increasingly juicy target to online vandals.

Passwords and encryption. It might sound obvious, but making sure that every user account on your Mac has a strong password is an important first line of defense. This means you need to disable the auto-login options that's set by default on your Mac. To do this, go to System Preferences and click on Accounts. Select

your account from the list on the left side, click on Login Options and set the Automatic login to Disabled. While you're in your account details, set your password to at least seven characters using a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols or punctuation. This sort of combination is very hard to break.

To make doubly sure that your data is safe, you can use OS X's FileVault system. FileVault encrypts all the files in your Home directory and decrypts them as you use them. FileVault's settings are in System Preferences under Security. By using FileVault, even if some steals your computer, removes the hard drive and puts it in another computer they won't be able to read your data without your password.

Let's get physical. As a traveller your mobile kit is your office. The notebook computer, smartphone, PDA or mobile phone are more than office tools – they're a communications umbilicus that keeps you connected to the office and home as well as storing gigabytes of crucial personal and business information.

Rule number one. Never leave your gear unattended or in the care of strangers. It might be tempting to leave your laptop bag or backpack at your seat in the departure lounge but don't do it. It only takes a second for a laptop bag to disappear in a sea of other commuters.

Rule number two. If you are working in an office and need to leave the laptop behind, use a security device to tether your notebook to the desk. Targus's Defcon CL Combo is a 2m galvanised steel cable with a combination lock. Using the Kensington lock slot (that's the seemingly useless hole on the side of your portable Mac) it'll require an organised thief with a decent set of bolt-cutters to take the computer. If they do manage to cut the cable then detaching the cable from the Mac will require that they either guess one of the 10,000 possible combinations or break the side of the laptop.

Rule number three. Don't visit secure web sites or enter passwords in unsecured places. You wouldn't tell a stranger your password or banking details, so why would you let them either watch you typing them in or read them off a screen? Even if all the would-be thief gets is your username they can try to log in, lock your account after some unsuccessful attempts and then potentially dupe the bank or other service provider into resetting the password.

Lock the Windows. Even though you're part of the enlightened Mac-erati there are some times when you need to run Windows applications. Since the move to Intel processors, it's been easier than ever for Apple systems to run Windows using virtualisation software like VMWare Fusion and Parallels Desktop. It's important to remember that Windows is no safer or more secure when running on a Mac than when it's installed to a regular PC.

Rule number one. Don't connect unless you need to. After starting your emulator, but before starting the Windows installation process, disconnect your network connection. While Windows is installing it can be vulnerable to malware. Once Windows is installed, don't give it access to the internet unless it's needed.

Rule number two. Enable the Windows firewall. Once Windows is installed make sure the Windows firewall is enabled (it should be by default but it doesn't hurt to check). You'll find it under the Start menu in Control Panel > Windows Firewall. You can enable it by checking the appropriate option. There are also many third party firewall applications you can try out that provide more sophisticated services such as managing which applications can send data in and out of the system.

Rule number three. Protect yourself against viruses and spyware. It's a nasty world out there so you'll need to make sure your inoculated against viruses and other types of malware. There are so many options out there that it can be confusing choosing an appropriate application. We've tried out a few. If the budget's tight AVG Free does the job and has a solid reputation. On the spyware front, Lavasoft's AdAware is a tried and true program for finding and eradicating spyware. It's also free.

Another free option is the Google Pack. Bundled in with the suite of apps are Norton Security Scan and Spyware Doctor. With these two programs, you can deal with most virus and spyware threats. However, they're both reduced-feature versions of commercial applications from their respective developers.

Trend Micro's Internet Security Pro provides a full suite of internet security tools including a spyware filter, anti-virus and firewall (that's used in place of the Windows Firewall). It installs easily and, as long as your virtual machine has at least 1GB of RAM allocated to Windows, works in the background. If an application tries to access the internet a pop-up appears asking you to authorise the program.

Security services and products. You can be as careful as you want, take every precaution you can, but someone might still steal your laptop. There are ways, however, to get it back.

Alert, and also alarmed. iAlertU is a free application that uses the Sudden Motion Sensor that protects

your hard drive and the iSight camera to form a two-pronged defense. Once the software is on, if someone tries to move the computer the motion sensor triggers a loud alarm that only turns off once you provide your password. Also, the iSight camera snaps a photo of the would-be thief and, when the system next makes an internet connection, e-mails the photo to you. My chief criticism of this is that when the camera shoots a photo of the thief there's no flash – so if the thief's working in low light you won't get a decent picture.

iAlertU is freeware and currently in beta.

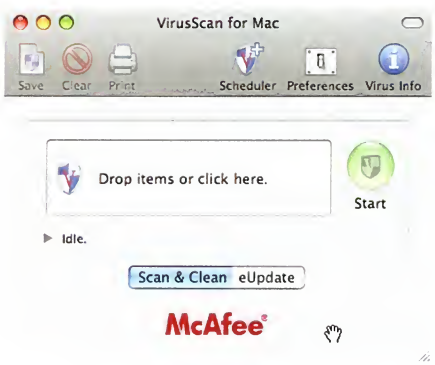
Verey true. Should the worst happen and your precious Mac is stolen then an app like Verey I can help with recovery. If your stolen Mac is connected to the internet Verey I, running invisibly, will send e-mail containing network and other information to predefined e-mail addresses unless your password is entered within a set period of time. The information can be used to track the location of the machine. It also uses the iSight camera and microphone to capture video with sound to help track the computer.

Made by Bak2U software and distributed by iWorld Australia, Verey I retails for $40 from many Mac resellers.

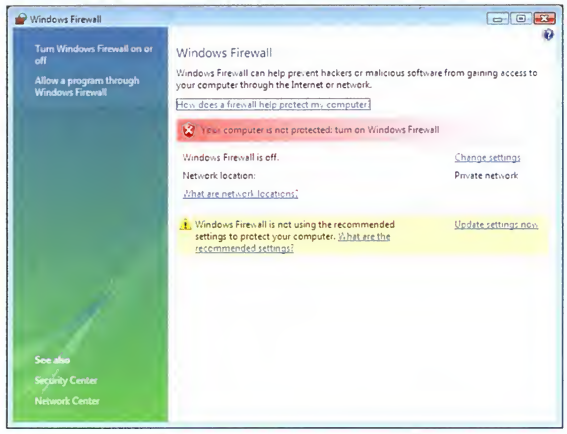
I've got the key. While FileVault encrypts data, it's still reliant on your password. If someone gets your password then they can still get to your precious data. SecuriKey takes a different approach by using a hardware token, which looks like a regular USB memory stick, as the decryption device.

The SecuriKey kit, made by Griffin Technologies, ships in a very impressive miniature aluminium briefcase and includes two USB tokens – just in case you lose one. After installing the accompanying software, you can safeguard your data using AES 128-bit encryption. Rather than encrypting your entire system, SecuriKey creates an encrypted volume. When you're working, any data you want to protect should be stored in that volume. To access the volume, you'll need both the SecuriKey token and your password.

SecuriKey costs $US130. Support for Leopard is expected soon.



Go go gadget. Sometimes it's not the biggest, most expensive devices in your mobile arsenal that cause the most pain if they're lost. It can be the USB memory stick, mobile phone or iPod that causes the most grief. GadgetTrak provides a solution to this through its range of solutions for protecting your gadgets.



PhoneBak provides a way of recovering a lost or stolen mobile phone. It's an application that's installed on your phone, and when an unauthorised SIM card is used with the handset the software sends an SMS to a predefined number letting you know the number of your phone's new owner, giving you a chance at recovery.

PhoneBak comes in two versions – one for regular mobiles and another for smartphones running Windows Mobile.

GadgetTrak USB performs a similar function. It's installed on USB memory sticks, portable hard drives, digital cameras and memory cards. If that device is connected to an unauthorised machine, it collects information about that system and invisibly sends it to GadgetTrak's servers. GadgetTrak creates a report from the data and, in the event that your device was stolen, work with you and law enforcement agencies to aid recovery.

PhoneBak costs $US29.95 and Gadget Trak pricing starts at $US14.95 for one device and $US45.95 for 20 devices.

Defense condition. Made of galvanised steel cable, the Defcon CL uses the Kensington slot on your portable computer to anchor the system to a desk. It comes with a locking base plate that can be adhered and screwed to your desk. If you'd prefer to not stick something to your desk then you can wrap the cable around a filing cabinet handle or a post if you're in an open plan office.

Securing the Defcon CL to my MacBook Pro was a cinch – the Kensington slot is the small hole on the right side of the notebook closest to the front. After setting a new combination, using the very clearly written instructions, I simply pushed the button on the combination lock and slid it into the hole. While the lock was in place I could still access the adjacent USB slot so it didn't hinder normal system usage.

The Targus Defcon CL retails for $89.

Stick it to them. I know what you're thinking – USB memory sticks are boring. Well, most of the time I'd

Backing up your data.

One of the most difficult things to do while you're on the road is making regular backups of your most important work. When you're home it's pretty easy if you're running Leopard. Just set up Time Machine to use a spare external hard drive and your system will be backed up with very little intervention on your part. If you're still using Tiger then TimeDrawer, a $30 piece of shareware, does a similar job. When you're on the road it's a little more challenging.

Online services like Apple's .Mac are excellent, providing you've got a decent internet connection. Simply work from your iDisk, the local copy of your online storage facility, and set the iDisk to synchronise automatically.

If you're on a prolonged trip, keep a stash of CDs or DVDs in your travel bag. Make regular backups of crucial files and send them back home. In between backups you do this way, remember to copy files to a memory stick.

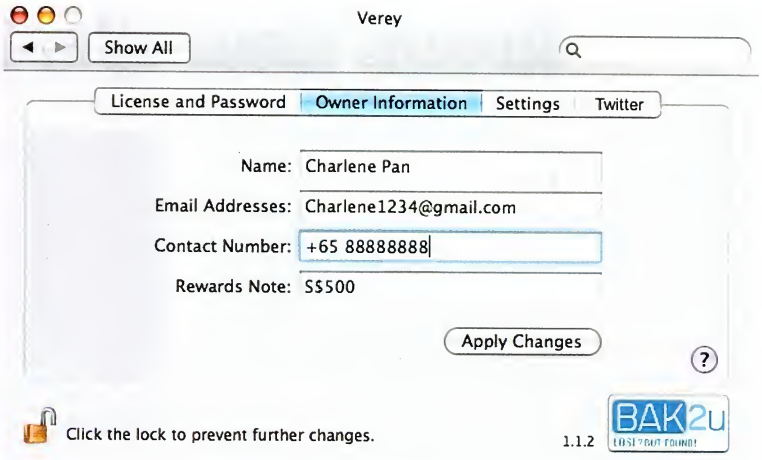
My advice: take a multi-pronged approach. Start by having copies of all your most important work files in at least two places. One place will be your hard drive and the other can be either a CD or DVD or a USB memory stick.

agree but the Lexar JumpDrive Secure II Plus is a little different to most drives. For starter, the LCD display on the outside displays the amount of space remaining on the drive. It'd be nice if the display was expressed in GBs or MBs rather than a percentage, but that just points to my lack of mathematical prowess and some laziness on my part.

The other standout on these memory sticks is something that you can't see on the outside – a Mac application (and a Windows version as well) called Secure II. This software allows you to create an encrypted folder to store files, encrypt individual files or securely delete data. I created a 256MB Encrypted Vault on my 2GB unit and was able to copy files to and from the vault with ease. The data was stored on the card and mounts as a disk after prompting for the password used in creating the secure vault.

While you won't be protected from losing the stick, at least you can be assured that data on the stick is well-protected if you do.

Lexar JumpDrive Secure II Plus flash drives come in sizes between 512MB and 4GB. The 2GB unit retails for $30.



To immunise or not to immunise – that is the question. There's plenty of debate on Apple message boards about whether or not Macs need anti-virus software. My view is that when (not if) a Mac virus is released and active in the wild, you'll want to be protected from the effects and not be a vector that transmits it.

McAfee has been active in the Mac anti-virus business for many years. Its product was previously known as Virex but is now called McAfee VirusScan for Mac. McAfee boasts that it will "keep your Apple computer free of viruses, Trojan horses and other malware". I tested a beta release of version 8.6, as it's the first to offer support for Leopard – which, coincidentally, was released about the same time as a genuine Trojan horse for Mac OS X. Installation was straightforward and didn't even require a reboot. You can choose to scan files by drag-dropping them onto the VirusScan window or enable "On Access Scanning" so that files are checked as you use them.

I didn't notice any system slowdowns while VirusScan was running. It used between 0.4 percent and 2.5 percent of CPU and about 100MB of memory. Interestingly, although VirusScan is a Universal application, a PowerPC process called VShieldEPOinter occasionally popped up in Activity Monitor. It didn't take up much memory or processor capacity and only appeared for a split second.

McAfee VirusScan for Mac retails for $105 for a three-user pack.

I decided not to review Symantec's anti-virus software this time around as a new version is due just before publication. Version 11 of Norton Antivirus and Version 4 of Norton Internet Security will be tested for Leopard and will offer anti-virus protection, internet worm protection and will scan downloads, e-mails, and IM attachments, according to Symantec.

Pricing is expected to be $60 for Norton Antivirus and $100 for Norton Internet Security.

Martin Levins
likes empowering people to create using computing technologies

Brave New World

IT'S said that part of Huxley's inspiration for writing *Brave New World* in 1932 was that he was "outraged by the culture of youth, commercial cheeriness and inward-looking nature of many Americans" (The Vintage Classics edition of *Brave New World*, quoted in wikipedia). Not much seems to have changed.

It's also said he was reacting to the pressures of the industrial revolution and its deification. His World State's motto, "Community, Identity and Stability," rings true for the march of social networking sites that we rejoice in or are plagued by, depending on your view.

The world of web 2.0 is neither brave nor new, but its read/write nature offers the same impact as Henry Ford's assembly line had on the society of his day. It's popular not just for social reasons, but in the world of learning where endless blogs chronicle the ideas of a range of thinkers, observers, futurists, hedonists and reactionaries.

Irrespective of how you view the outpourings of any particular blogger, our own experience as educators shows that the discipline of having to write regularly for authentic audiences sharpens both your view and your focus. The intersection of the read/write world and authentic audiences leads to the concept of an Electronic Portfolio, or, more trendily, an ePortfolio.

The etymology of "portfolio" refers to the carrying of paper, usually as an example of work done. You can hear teachers saying "that should go in your portfolio" or "let's put this project into our portfolio". The addition of

"electronic" doesn't often change anything in these circumstances, other than a reference to the medium. The interactive nature of an ePortfolio and the reflective nature of blogging, often capturing the thinking process itself, is increasingly becoming part of the ePortfolio concept and this changes both its form and intent.

In August 2007, BECTA, the UK government's partner in educational ICT strategy, received a report on ePortfolios from the Learning Sciences Research Institute at The University of Nottingham. The report was commissioned by the organisation to investigate the impact of ePortfolios "in the light of current policy to provide a 'personalised online learning space for every learner that can encompass a personal portfolio' to every (UK) school by 2008".

This movement is not limited to the UK. A simple search will reveal many high-level projects such as the independent, not-for-profit professional association known as the European Institute for E-Learning which is leading the charge for Europortfolio. It has stated Europortfolio's goal as: "in 2010, every citizen will have an ePortfolio", although its roadmap to 2010 shows the key performance indicator of "ePortfolio benefits explained and understood" as yet to have been achieved (there are lots of policies though). Clearly, there is confusion as to the nature and benefits of such ePortfolios, and the waters become further muddied when you look at the software component of the recipe. You can imagine the feeding frenzy generated by the promise of every citizen in Europe using a particular vendor's solution.

Helen Barrett, emeritus Apple Distinguished Educator and affiliated with the University of Oregon's Center for Advanced Technology in Education, has focussed on technology support for electronic portfolios, and has extensive notes on her web site as to their purpose, benefits and methodologies.

One of the technologies she discusses in this context is iWeb, and it provides an interesting avenue for the ePortfolio experience in that its flexibility and power go far beyond the recording of achievements or reflection on learning.

There are two features that make it so, and one that almost immediately robs it of consideration. The easy integration of rich media, and its production of web-ready HTML makes iWeb a standout. We can save any iWeb-produced sites to any medium and they will be read by any web server — something that few solutions offer, making portability of portfolios easy.

The show-stopper is iWeb's dependence on .Mac for comments in blogs, which limits it to a read-only experience. Read/write is for all; receiving comments on your work, or work in progress, reinforces the concept of an authentic audience.

It's not that it can't be done. Leopard's "Teams" blogging allows commenting, so why not leverage both, integrating with iWeb and providing a world-class ePortfolio opportunity?

Forgive my excursion into Huxley-speak, but, by Ford, forget the Soma: give us the Community, Identity and Stability we expect.

Hotlinks

partners.becta.org.uk
Access BECTA's reports on Electronic Portfolios
www.eife-l.org
The European Institute for E-Learning
electronicportfolios.org/blog/index.html
Helen Barret's compendium of Electronic Portolio research

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iHome™
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New Features
Same Price

Model iH8 / **iHome has all bases covered!**

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- Gradual Wake and Gradual Sleep volume function
- Plays and charges all docking iPod® models, Universal Dock included
- Equaliser controls treble, bass and balance
- Designed for Australia AM/FM radio with 12AM/FM presets
- Enhanced FM reception PLL Digital Radio Tuning
- Full function remote controls both clock radio and iPod®
- Aux Line-in for portable CD player, other MP3 players, etc
- Reson8™ speaker technology for high- fidelity bass and clarity
- Visit: www.ihomeaudio.com (White and Black models available)

For all docking iPods® including nano!

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CONEXUS

⌘-2

Matthew Honan
Illustration by
Eric Sturdevant

A BLOG FOR EVERYONE

When it comes to blogging services, one size doesn't fit all

I AM currently the owner of six blogs, which cover everything from birding to books – and I use several platforms to run them all. That's because different blogging services have different strengths. So it makes sense to choose the one that works best for the type of content I'm creating. While some services offer pure ease of use, others are geared toward business blogs or social networks.

For the personal blog. If you want your blog to serve as a journal – that is, a place to share your thoughts and daily musings – keeping things simple is important. If blogging is a chore, you won't do it.

A pioneer of push-button publishing, Google's Blogger (see "Hotlinks") is hard to beat for ease of use. Before Blogger, almost all blogs required that users write their own code. While that's no longer the case, Blogger remains the gold standard for simplicity.

Getting started is a cinch. If you already have a Gmail address or a Google account, you're ready to go. If not, you'll need to sign up on Blogger's home page. Once you have an account, you can give your blog a title and choose a URL on Blogspot, Blogger's free hosting service (you can also move the blog to your own domain).

Under the Settings tab are numerous options for customising your blog; for instance, you can choose how many posts appear on the main page, and set default rules for who can comment (anyone, registered users, or just authors of the blog). The Template tab lets you tweak your blog's colours and fonts, select a new design, or enter your own code. You can also find ready-made templates at sites like BlogSkins (see "Hotlinks"). Just be sure to include Blogger's proprietary posting tags in your template (see "Hotlinks"); otherwise, your site won't publish correctly. To use the service's WYSIWYG tools for formatting text and adding links, you'll need Safari 3 or a third-party browser such as Firefox or Camino.

Another good option is Automattic's WordPress (see "Hotlinks"). It's easy to use but powerful and quite tweakable. WordPress offers a much wider selection of templates than Blogger. You can choose from templates with one or two colours and clean lines, or you can opt for one of the bolder designs that look like something straight out of a modern-art museum. WordPress also offers some basic protection from comment spam with Akismet, a service that filters out junk before it bothers you. If something does slip through the cracks, you can banish it from your site by clicking on Comments and marking it as spam. And for $US10 a year, you can even publish your WordPress blog to your own domain.

For the business blog. If you're looking to push the boundaries of what you can do with a blog – especially if you want to use the blog as a part

Hotlinks

www.blogger.com
Blogger
www.BlogSkins.com
Customise Blogger
help.blogger.com/bin/answer.py?answer=42095&topic=8930
Formatting tags for Blogger
www.wordpress.com
WordPress
www.typepad.com
TypePad
www.vox.com
Vox
www.tumblr.com
Tumblr
faq.wordpress.com/2006/11/10/domain-mapping/
www.sixapart.com/typepad/news/2004/03/domain_mapping_3.html
www.tumblr.com/help
help.blogger.com/bin/answer.py?answer=55373
Help for using custom domain names
www.livejournal.com
LiveJournal
faq.wordpress.com/2006/06/08/allowed-html-tags/
WordPress's list of permitted HTML tags
www.widgetbox.com
WidgetBox
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Calendar widget
nikeplus.nike.com/nikeplus/
Nike widget
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Last.fm
twitter.com/badges
Twitter widget
tinyurl.com/396ft7
Upcoming
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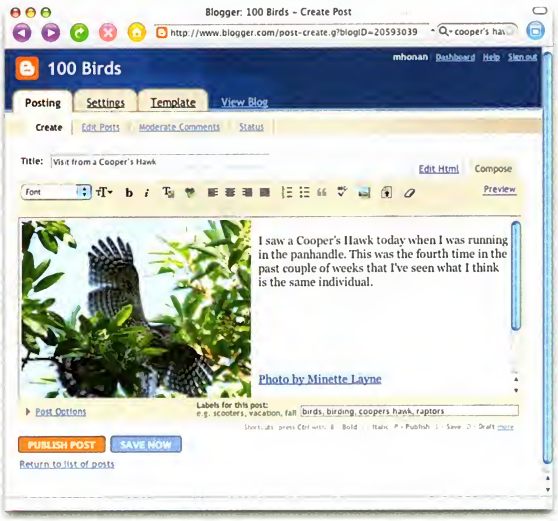
LinkedIn
www.facebook.com/badges.php
Facebook
www.flickr.com/badge.gne
Flickr
www.meebome.com
Meebo
www.facebook.com/apps
Customise Facebook

THE SMART BLOGGER'S GUIDE

Got something to talk about? Find the right home and best add-ons for your blog.

THESE days, you can find a blog for just about anything. Looking for affordable art prints? Weheartprints.com has them. Interested in Craftsman, Mission, and Prairie furniture? Check out hewnandhammered.com. In fact, according to the blog-tracking service Technorati, there are some 70 million active weblogs. And for good reason: blogs are a fun and easy way to communicate. They can even be profitable. Some blogging services (such as Blogger and TypePad) include tools that automatically publish advertisements, based on the topics you write about, on your site.

No matter what your reasons for blogging, there are plenty of tools that can help you get started and keep readers tuned in — but not all blogging services are the same. I'll give you the inside scoop on five great online services that appeal to different types of bloggers, as well as 13 add-ons that let you customise your blog with music, games, headlines, and more.



Blogger. Blogger's what-you-see-is-what-you-get interface makes for easy posting and formatting — no HTML required.

of your business – check out Six Apart's TypePad (see "Hotlinks"). This service is more flexible than Blogger and WordPress, and it gives your blog room to grow. In fact, several professional media outlets, including MSNBC, Time, and Wired, rely on it for their weblogs. TypePad is not for people looking for a free trip through the blogosphere, though: plans start at $US5 a month for the basic level, which gets you one blog for a single blogger, and run to $US30 a month for a plan with multiple authors, unlimited blogs, and lots of bandwidth and storage space.

One feature that makes TypePad ideal for businesses is that it lets you set up static pages – for example, a home page or a bio page – with designs that match your blog's theme. Meanwhile, you get incredible control over your blog's layout; for instance, you can set the number of columns, specify whether your sidebar is on the left or right, and more. For multimedia-heavy blogs, TypePad offers a selection of mixed-media layouts that prominently display photos or videos.

Keep it private

With most blogging platforms, you can choose whether the service publicises your work — but a simple Google search for your name or company can easily turn up your blog, potentially exposing it to the eyes of co-workers and future employers.

If you want to blog about sensitive issues — for example, your job, a relationship, or an illness — you may want to set up a blog that only friends or family can read. Community-oriented services such as Vox and LiveJournal (see "Hotlinks") let you restrict posts to viewing by authorised people. If you go with a service that doesn't provide this option, make it a policy from the get-go to not mention your company or the full names of people you may be talking smack about (see the sidebar "Best blogging practices" for more tips).

TypePad's protection against comment spam goes beyond the capabilities of Blogger and WordPress. For instance, you can restrict comments to authenticated users, or require that people type in a code, which ensures that a human being and not a computer program is doing the commenting. You can also ban commenters and report spammers to TypePad to help weed those users out.

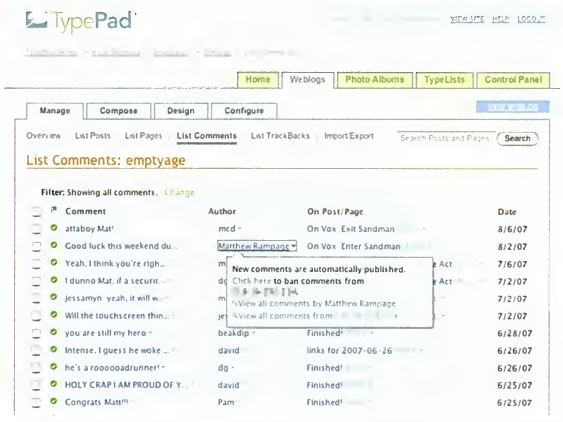
Oone of TypePad's biggest draws may be its tech support. When I've had problems that I couldn't find an answer to in the knowledge base – rare occurrences – I've always been able to get an actual living, breathing person to give me a hand.

For the community blog. Vox (see "Hotlinks") is another blogging service from Six Apart, but it focuses on multimedia and social-networking features. It's a great service if you want to keep in touch with a like-minded community, or if you simply want to correspond with a group of friends. There's one catch: Although Six Apart claims that Vox will work with the final version of Safari 3, it wasn't fully compatible with the beta available at press time. However, you can always use Mozilla Firefox or Camino.

When you set up a blog on Vox, you have your pick of hundreds of designs. Many themes complement specific interests, such as cycling, music, and travel. Some focus on cities (such as Las Vegas, New York, and Kiev), while others are associated with seasons and holidays. There are several layout options, but unlike with Blogger and TypePad, you can't completely overhaul the design and layout. Also, Vox doesn't allow you to publish to your own server; you're stuck with the yoursitename.vox.com naming scheme.

When you create a new post, you'll see buttons for inserting photos, audio, books, and videos. If you click on Videos, for example, Vox will let you upload a new video from your Mac or embed one from iFilm or YouTube.

TypePad. TypePad gives you control over who can comment, and it lets you easily manage spam.



Home, home on the web

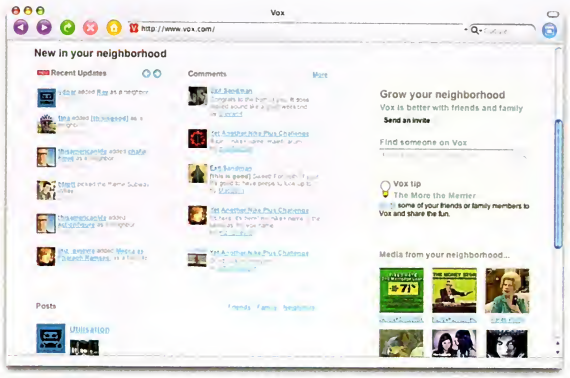
If you're hoping to make money with your blog, having your own web address is a must. Blogging on your own domain, however, takes a little bit more setup. You typically do it in one of two ways: by publishing to your own server via FTP, or by domain mapping.

Google's Blogger and desktop blogging programs such as iWeb and Rapidweaver support publishing to your domain via FTP. Just make sure you have enough server space to do this. WordPress, TypePad, and Tumblr, on the other hand, all use domain mapping (Blogger offers this as an option, too). This means your custom URL is pointed toward, or mapped to, your blog. In other words, when people type in your domain, they end up at your hosted blog. In most cases, you can do this with the registrar from which you purchased your domain. Each service and registrar does things a bit differently, but no matter which one you use, it's often a good idea to set up a subdomain or folder to publish your blog to, such as blog.yoursitename.com or yoursitename.com/blog (rather than your top-level domain, yoursitename.com). This allows you to publish material other than your blog on the same domain.

For more details, check out each site's domain-mapping FAQ (listed in "Hotlinks").

There's also an Amazon.com tab that lets you search for a film and insert its poster art along with a link to the DVD. As for images, you can upload your own, search for a stock image at iStockphoto.com, or have Vox pull pictures from Flickr or Photobucket. Vox embeds these items in your post, allowing you to specify their size and alignment.

Of course, there may be times when you don't want the entire world to see one of your photos or videos – say, when it's a snapshot of you at a party, and you appear less than sober in it. This is where Vox's community tools come in handy. You can assign people as contacts (or neighbours in Vox's parlance), friends, family, or all of the above. Then you can designate posts as accessible only for friends, family, or neighbours. Also, since Vox's front page gives you a view of your neighbourhood – posts and media uploads from all your contacts – Vox is an easy way to keep tabs on friends or other users with whom you share interests.



Vox. Vox's community features make it a snap to keep tabs on your friends.

For the mobile blog. To get the ultimate in simplicity, turn to Tumblr (see "Hotlinks"), a publishing service designed for tumblelogs. A tumblelog is a type of blog designed for quick hits – short posts, pictures, web links, and videos – rather than long-form text entries. This makes it ideal for posting from a mobile phone.

Enter your e-mail address, a password, and a desired web address (you can later change it to your domain if you want), and you're ready to publish.

When it comes to posting, you'll see buttons for different types of entries, including text, photos, quotes, links, chat transcripts, and videos. Tumblr also imports feeds from various sources, such as Flickr, YouTube, Digg, Del.

Best blogging practices

So how do you create an interesting blog and get the word out? We talked to Anil Dash, the vice president of evangelism for Six Apart, to glean some of his best blogging tips.

Find inspiration around you. Feeling blocked? Dash suggests taking things that you've sent in an e-mail and repurposing them for posts, or using feedback from your community as fodder for new content. Tying current events to the topic of your blog works well. And don't be afraid to link to another blog, a web site, or a video as an excuse to update your site.

Promote, promote. Tell friends and family about your blog, and add a link to it in your e-mail signature. Find a few blogs that are related to yours and send an e-mail to their authors — they might end up linking back to your site.

Don't force updates. Update as often as you have something to say. "If you force it, your readers will be able to tell, and you won't be doing anyone any favours," says Dash. For a business blog, he recommends updating several times a week, "though some excellent business blogs only update a few times a month."

Deal with problem commenters. In cyberspace, accountability is key. Dash says that commenters will be less likely to cause problems if you require that they supply an e-mail address or use an authentication service. And if inappropriate comments do pop up, feel free to delete or edit them.

WIDGET WONDERLAND

Make your blog more interactive with these web tools

ANYONE can slap pictures and text on a web page and call it a blog. It's much harder to make a blog that stands out from the pack. One way to do so is by dressing up your site with widgets. Widgets are essentially tiny programs that add functionality, transforming your blog into something unique. For instance, a widget can display your photos, an RSS feed from another site, a list of songs you've listened to lately, or even a map that shows the places you've visited.

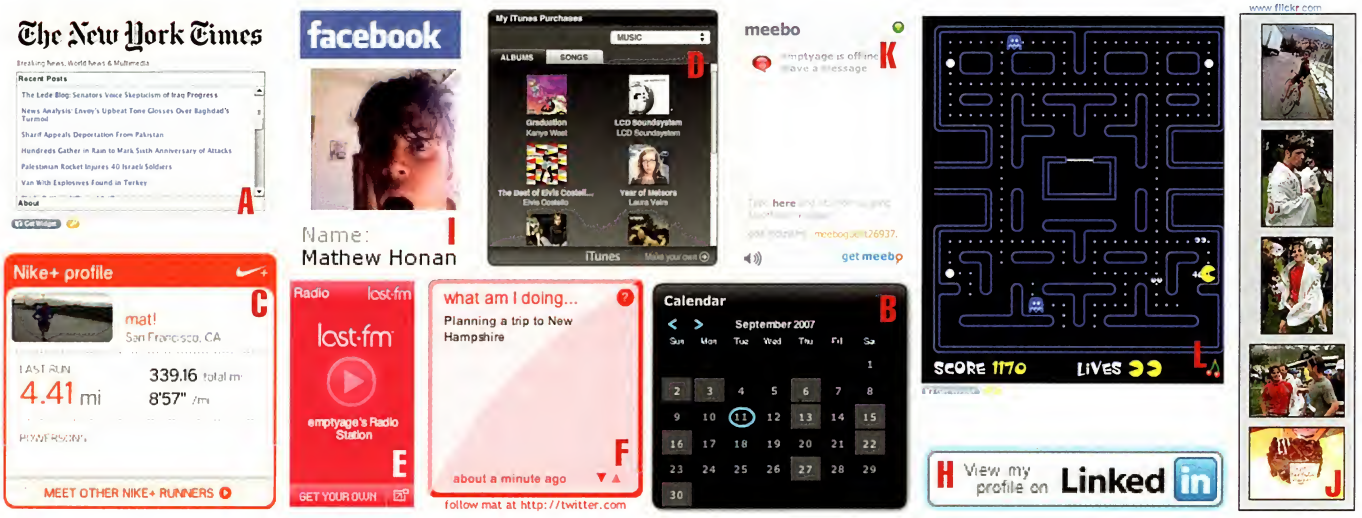
Installing widgets. Adding widgets to your blog is generally painless. In fact, some services supply their own, making installation an easy, automated process. One such service is WordPress, which offers a calendar widget, a widget for displaying your blog stats, a Flickr widget, and more. To install one, select the Presentation link, click on Widgets, and then drag and drop the one you want onto your blog. TypePad has an even wider selection, offering everything from a Google calendar widget to a widget that displays a daily cocktail. Click on the Design tab and then search the Widget Gallery. When you select one you like, TypePad automatically adds it to the sidebar of your blog.

Even if you're not using one of these services, you can add widgets to your site. Some widgets include an automatic installation option for popular blogging services, which takes the brainwork out of incorporating them. Otherwise, you'll need to copy the widget's code (there's typically a button that selects the right code for you) and paste it into your blog's template. I recommend placing widgets in your blog's sidebar, which makes them available on all pages (unless you've set up your blog to publish individual pages with different templates or sets of rules).

Blogger lets you add widgets to either the sidebar or the bottom of your page. Click on the Template tab, and then go to Page Elements. Click on Add A Page Element, choose the HTML/JavaScript option, and paste in the code. In TypePad, you can add external widgets to your sidebar as TypeLists. Go to the TypeLists tab and create a new Notes TypeList. Paste the code for your widget into the Note field.

WordPress makes things a little more challenging. Because the service blocks a number of commonly used HTML tags, many third-party widgets won't display properly (especially ones with dynamic images and scripts). To see a list of WordPress's supported HTML tags, see "Hotlinks". Still, if you want to give it a whirl, go to the Presentation tab and click on Widgets. Drag the Text widget to your sidebar, click on the configure icon, and paste the code into the sidebar's body. (WordPress.org offers an installable version of its software that will let you install other widgets of your choosing, as long as you have your own web host and are confident about doing some site administration.) If you're using Vox or Tumblr, you're out of luck. Neither service provides a way to place widgets in the sidebar.

Finding widgets. So now that you know how to install widgets, it's time to deck out your blog. Widgets are available from individual developers and from on-



line collection sites like Widgetbox (see "Hot links"). Not sure where to begin? Here are some ideas. URLs can be found in "Hotlinks"

General interest. A number of all-purpose widgets can take your blog to the next level. With Widgetbox's New York Times widget **A**, for instance, your blog can be your newsroom, updating visitors not only about what's going on with you but also about the world at large.

Perhaps you'd like to add a calendar with iCal data so visitors will be able to search for upcoming events. With the YourMinis Calendar widget **B**, you simply enter the web address of your published iCal calendar – above the widget, click on Edit Me and then on Edit, and enter the URL where people can subscribe to your published iCal calendar – and then copy and paste the code to your blog. Or if you're an avid runner and use the iPod Nike+ Sport Kit to track workouts, the Nike Plus widget **C** is a great way to boast about your distance total, challenges, and goals.

Music widgets. Want to show the world how good (or bad) your taste in music is? Apple's My iTunes widgets **D** broadcast your latest purchases, music or videos you've reviewed, or your favourite iTunes artists. To grab these widgets, visit your iTunes Store account settings and click on Enable My iTunes.

Widgets also exist for fans of internet radio. Last.fm **E**, for example, lets you create a miniature radio station that plays your preferred types of tunes right on your blog.

Web tie-ins. If you're keeping a blog, chances are you're also maintaining personal data on other sites, whether it's a page on Facebook or photos on Flickr. So why not incorporate the highlights into your blog? The Twitter widget **F** displays your latest tweets so you can inform visitors about what you're doing right now without having to create a new post. Or you can add a widget from Upcoming **G** that keeps visitors up-to-date on which concerts, games, and conventions you're hitting in the coming weeks.

If you want visitors to find you on your social-networking site of choice, drop in a widget that ties back to your profile. For LinkedIn **H**, a variety of buttons connect back to your professional profile. If you use Facebook **I** you can add a widget that links to your profile and ever includes some basic updates you make on the 'book (To find out how to add widgets to a social-networking page, see the sidebar "Accessorise your social space."

For photos, the static Flickr badge **J** displays a selection of recent pictures (up to ten), while the Flash badge adds motion, rotating different photos from your entire stream or from a specific set or group.

Widgets for fun. Of course, widgets don't need to be informational. They can just be entertaining distractions that encourage visitors to hang out on your site. For instance, the Meebo widget **K** lets users chat live on the web and, if you aren't around, visitors are able to leave a message. Or for pure nostalgia, WidgetBox's Pac-Man widget **L** gives visitors a crack at popping pills and chomping ghosts across your blog.

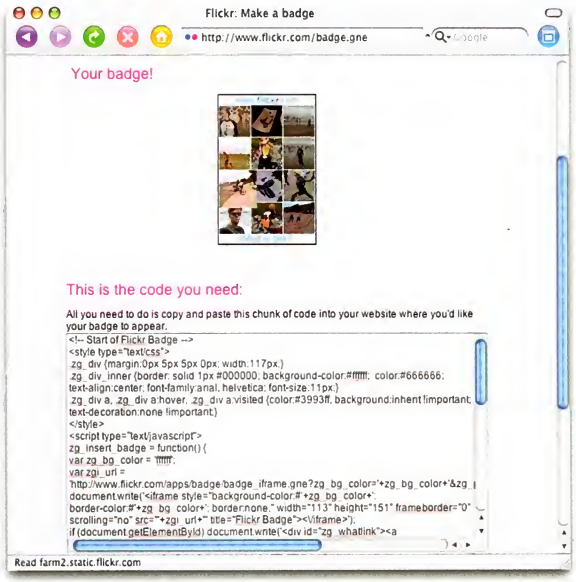
Accessorise your social space

If you're one of the 50 million people with a MySpace page, or one of the growing number of Facebook users, you've got a world of widgets to choose from. However, installing them isn't as cut-and-dried as it is on your own blog, since MySpace and Facebook offer less leeway in how you can manipulate your page. MySpace actually blocks some widgets, so you need to make sure that the ones you want to add will work.

One way around this is to use Widgetbox, which automatically installs widgets on both sites. When you find a widget you like, look for the MySpace or Facebook icon. If it's there, you can add that widget to your page with just a few clicks.

For Facebook users, there's an even easier way. Facebook now lets you add miniature programs to your profile page, such as a map of cities you've visited or a program that establishes a personal training regimen based on your fitness goals (see "Hotlinks"). You can see a huge (and growing) list of widgets by clicking on the Applications link near the top left side of any Facebook page.

Keep it fresh. The best way to discover widgets is to surf, sample, and see what works. At the end of the day, a blog's goal is to offer content that makes people want to come back again and again, whether it's your mom or an interested reader halfway around the world.



Getting the code. Adding a widget is usually as easy as copying a snippet of code and adding it to your site.

Fleur Doidge
believes everyone
has a story to tell.

Flash in the pan

ROCKETBOOTS sits on Sydney's Fort Street, with a view of the harbour bridge approach and a corner of the Opera House. It's Robin Hilliard's first try at running a company — and it's a consultancy with a difference. Hilliard explains: "With people aged in their 30s and 40s, people are more comfortable being contractors. And the thing is, today, more people are in small companies and are just not available in the job market.

"So that's why we're not trying to get on a payroll, we're trying to network with companies that are already out there — it's a trusted network."

Hilliard says Rocketboots is a network of little solution providers that supply services as needed, putting teams together for specific projects or providing trainers or web development solutions. The idea is to be fast and nimble — like the eponymous jet-propelled boots — helping other businesses grow by providing skills hard to find in the marketplace.

"And when you're contracting, it's all about the connections. We're a group of people who trust each other," he says. "Most of us are Mac users. It's hard to pick one who isn't using a Mac, I think, generally, in the developer world — but also particularly in Adobe-related developer work."

Adobe-related work is Rocketboots' speciality. "I was in Tokyo the other week at Mac [Expo] Japan. The majority of machines were Apples. The only product that I use that isn't available to run on the Mac natively is Flash Media Server and that I run [in Parallels]," Hilliard says.

Running a company, he says, has so far been "an interesting experience". His strength was technology —

he needed to learn the business skills. Hilliard started the business off with three other team members, but they departed after the first year to follow other projects.

"So I bought the other guys out — but we still all go around to each other's to watch movies and stuff," he says.

Hilliard graduated Bachelor of Science from Sydney University, majoring in pure mathematics and computer science, in 1995. He was hired for the technology integration practice at Andersen Consulting, where he worked mainly with Microsoft apps. In 1999, he moved to dotcom Zivo, where he worked on Microsoft and Allaire as a senior technical team leader on projects for customers like BHP. And in 2000, he went to Allaire and Macromedia.

"When I was support engineer at Allaire, I would be coming into projects and had to leave just as things started to get interesting. I came from a consulting background, so I found it frustrating not to be involved in the core of a project and could see quite a few projects failing for simple things," Hilliard says.

Then he was retrenched. And the move to create Rocketboots seemed obvious. Hilliard already knew a lot of the partners and had contacts with customers. "Macromedia and Adobe didn't have a consulting organisation in the region; they had a small team in the US, but it was too expensive to do in Australia," he says.

Skills shortage. Rocketboots, though, has been on the pointy end of the current IT skills shortage. Knowledge in applications like ColdFusion is thin on the ground locally, he says. "And I was talking to Sydney University last year — the interest in computer science has been lower than since the 1970s. Very ironic," he says.

"During the dotcom crash, in the industry, there was a whole lot of developers with three to six years experience who didn't come on because of the crash. We've got juniors and seniors, but we're screaming out for people with skills in Flex/Flash and ColdFusion at the moment."

Rocketboots plans to visit more universities and technical colleges to encourage talent. The way Hilliard sees it, the industry must be prepared to train juniors and foster intern programs. Getting staff from overseas isn't easy even as a short-term fix, according to Hilliard, because you can hire them but clients don't really want to commit for a length of time. And skilled staff are in demand overseas as well.

"I was in Singapore talking to some guys from India and asked if they'd work for us, and they said, 'we're sorry but we've got full-time $200 per hour [from the US]'," says Hilliard. "We can solve a lot of different problems for people if we can get some more people."

Sea and sky. Hilliard, when not at work, enjoys family life in Summer Hill, a suburb in western Sydney, with his wife Sarah and two little daughters aged five and seven. "They're very funny," he says.

He has also built an Orkney Islands whaling-type wooden boat to sail

Hotlinks

www.rocketboots.com.au
Adobe consulting

around — a project that meant a trip to South Australia in 1996, building the five-metre boat over a six month period then trekking back to NSW with it on the top of the car. "I always wanted to build a boat," he says.

"We didn't have to wet the wood to shape it or anything. It's much easier to build a boat with modern materials than people think. The glue is very forgiving — you can miss by a few millimetres and things like that. And marine plywood is easy to work with."

He used to fly as well, but, regretfully, no longer has the time. Flying isn't terribly compatible with starting a small business, he says. "I did fly light planes, and more recently Pipers and Cessnas. I flew out at Hoxton Park, before it was sold off and turned into a truck terminal."

Small aviation is in crisis across Australia, to hear Hilliard tell it. Developers have been given access to large numbers of little airfields all over the country. "It's a complete crime," Hilliard says. "Hoxton Park sat there for 50 years and they go and build a housing development at the end of the runway."

He once had plans for a business called Anywair, an attempt to run a US-style air brokerage. In the US, small air brokerages are proliferating — flying around picking up private passengers and taking them where they need to go. Hilliard says the model is efficient and a "big revolution" happening in air travel. "Yet in Australia, they're shutting the airports."

So where from here?

Rocketboots had just been acquired by Frame Group at the time of writing — meaning the consultancy is now supported by a company of 80 people who do large projects with different strands of business, and offices in major centres. "The great thing about Frame is that they've got seriously good contract and project management experience. They build data centres for banks and that sort of thing," says Hilliard.

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HELP

Creative shortcuts

30 ways to save time and work smarter in iLife '08

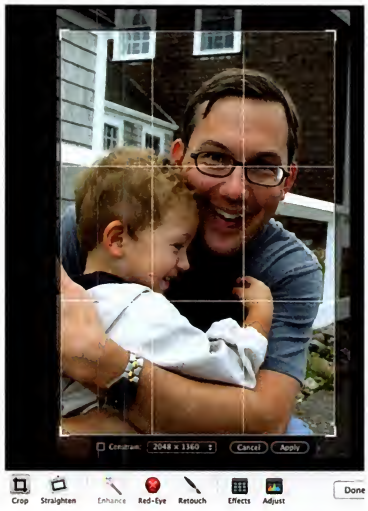
WORKING with photos, video, and music is supposed to be fun — a fact that's easy to forget when you've been hunched over your computer for hours trying to finish up your latest masterpiece. But being creative doesn't have to be a pain. iLife '08 is packed with hidden features and timesaving tools that will help you zip through your next project.

iPhoto.

By choosing the right settings and employing some savvy shortcuts, you can spend more time admiring your photos and less time managing them. — *Jim Heid*

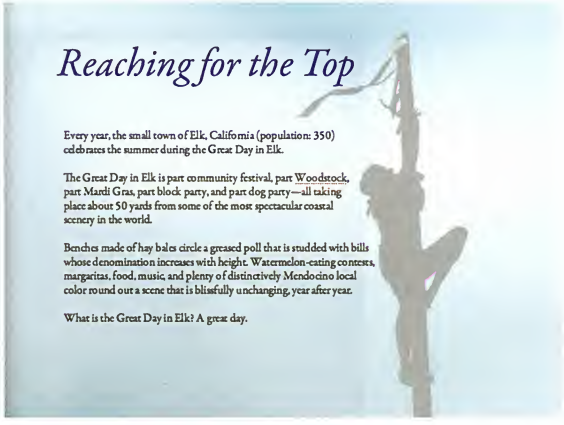
Crop by the rules. When you use the revamped Crop tool, iPhoto displays a grid that divides the crop area into thirds. You can often improve the composition of a photo by placing its subject along one of the inner lines of this grid. This composition technique is called the "rule of thirds."

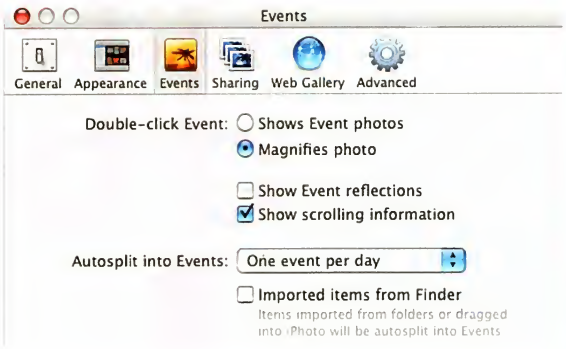
Avoid duplicates. It's a common scenario: You import some shots but then forget to erase your memory card before shooting more photos. The next time you plug in your camera, you're stuck trying to remember which photos you've already imported. In iPhoto '08, there's an easy fix. In the Import pane, simply select the Hide Photos Already Imported option. Thumbnails for photos in your library will vanish from the Import pane.



Use a photo as your background. When you're creating a book, iPhoto '08 lets you use a photo as the background of a book page, with photos and text layered on top. In the book editor, select the page to which you want to apply the background image, open the Background pop-up menu, and select the option with a palm-tree icon. Then drag a photo onto the book page, being careful to avoid any photo boxes. To make the photo lighter so that it doesn't overwhelm the text on the page, click on the background image once, and then use the opacity slider that appears above the photo.

(Look for a feature in the 03.2008 issue of *Australian Macworld* to tell you how to get photo books printed locally.)





Double-click to zoom If you double-click on a photo while skimming through an event's thumbnails, iPhoto opens a pane with all the event's photos — not just the one you clicked on. To change that behaviour, choose iPhoto: Preferences, click on the Events tab, and then set the Double-Click Event menu to Magnifies Photo. Now when you're skimming across an event, you can simply double-click on a photo to magnify it.

Click on the Show Photos button at the bottom of each event's thumbnail to view all the photos (or press the return key).

Quickly set a key photo. Each iPhoto event is represented by one photo, called the key photo. iPhoto uses an event's first photo as the key photo, but you can change that. To quickly choose a different image, skim across the event until you see the photo you want, and then press the spacebar.

Move *en masse*. Got photos stashed across your library that you want to store in a new event? Rather

than moving them a few at a time, use the flag feature. Flagging a shot is like attaching a sticky note or a paper clip to it.

Select a photo you want to flag, and then click on the Flag button or press ⌘-period (.). After flagging all the shots you want to store in your new event, choose Events: Create Event From Flagged Photos. iPhoto will move the photos from their current locations and stash them in a new event.

Then, to clear all the flags in your library quickly, click on the small numeral to the right of the Flagged item under the Recent section of your Library list.

iMovie.

The newest version of Apple's consumer video-editing program bears almost no resemblance to its predecessor, but these tips should help you feel right at home.

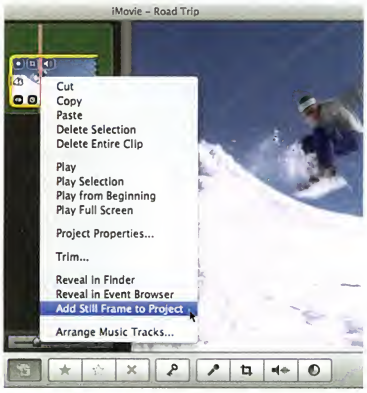
— Mike Curtis and Jim Heid

Make clips searchable. To make managing a large video library easier, iMovie '08 lets you apply keywords to your clips — but the feature isn't

turned on by default. Select iMovie: Preferences and turn on the Show Advanced Tools option. Use your cursor to select a section of video — you can assign keywords to entire clips or portions of clips — and then click on the newly-added key icon in the toolbar. This opens the Keywords pane. Click to place a check mark next to the keywords you want to apply, or type a new one in the text field and click on Add. You can apply as many keywords to a clip as you want.

To use keywords to track down clips, select Window: Keyword Filter. In the resulting pane, place a check mark next to keywords you want to filter by. To search for clips that don't include a specific keyword, select Exclude at the bottom of the pane.

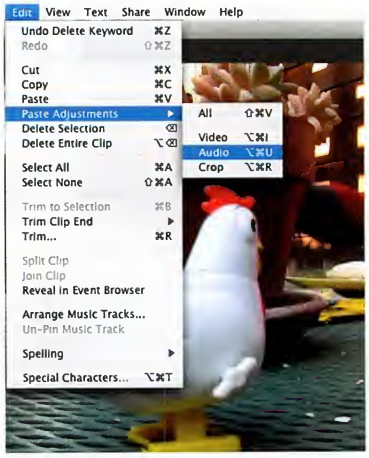
Freeze frames. iMovie 7.1, a free update released in September, lets you create a still frame from a video clip. This is particularly useful for title sequences. Position the cursor at the very beginning of the first clip, control-click, and then choose Add Still Frame To Project. iMovie creates a still frame



and adds it to the end of the project. Drag that still frame to the front of the project, just before the clip where it originated, and then add a title. To adjust the duration of the frame, choose Edit: Set Duration. Now when the title text disappears, the scene will spring to life.

Make titles TV-friendly. If you're creating a movie that will be viewed on a TV, don't use the subtitle lines of iMovie's Title styles. Most TVs cut off the outer edges of video frames, including where these subtitles appear. (The exception is the Centered title.) If you use any of the left-aligned title styles, bump the text to the right a bit by pressing the spacebar a few times.

Hide your goofs. Why waste time combing through bad video? You can highlight a clip portion you don't like and press R to reject it. iMovie will remove the video from your event browser. Don't worry — the clips aren't thrown away. To reveal your rejected clips, select View: All Clips or View: Rejected Only.



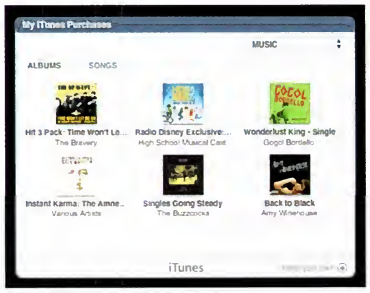
Copy effects. Once you've perfected the panning motion or muted the audio in one clip, you don't need to repeat the effort. iMovie lets you copy adjustments to other clips. For example, to mute the audio for all clips in a movie, mute the first clip and then choose Edit: Copy. Select the rest of the clips, and choose Edit: Paste Adjustments: Audio.

Get info. To see which keywords you've applied to a clip quickly, as well as the date and time it was shot, press ⌘-Y. Then, as you move your cursor over different clips, a status display with the relevant information will appear above your cursor. To conceal it, press ⌘-Y again.

iWeb.

Apple's template-driven HTML program takes the stress out of building web sites. If you crave some creative freedom, these secrets can help

— Jason Cranford Teague

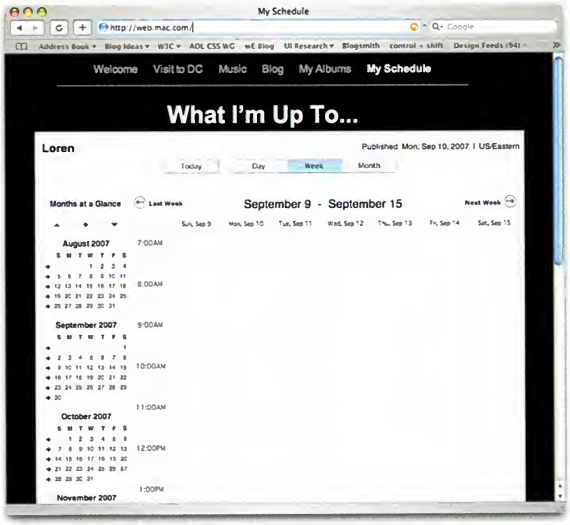


Share an iTunes playlist. Want to show off your outstanding taste in music? Although iWeb won't let you play protected music files on your site, you can share your carefully-constructed iTunes playlists. Simply drag a playlist from the Audio tab in the Media Browser directly onto a web page. You'll get a list of links to the iTunes Store; visitors can use those links to preview and buy recommended tunes.

To offer even more musical insight — including your favourite artists, music reviews, and your latest purchases — add the My iTunes widget from the iTunes Store. To find the code, go to the iTunes Store and click on Account. On the Apple Account Information Page, click on the Manage My iTunes button. (If this is your first time, the button will read Enable My iTunes.) Select the information you want to add to your site, and then click on the Get HTML Code button. Specify how you want the widget to appear, and then click on the Copy Code button. Back in iWeb, click on the Web Widgets button and select HTML Snippet. Paste the code (⌘-V) into the empty field and click on Apply. Your list will now appear in your web page and will dynamically update with new purchases, favourites, and reviews.

Show off your schedule. With the help of a simple HTML tag, you can incorporate external web pages into your iWeb designs. This can be useful, for example, if you want to include your published iCal calendar on your web site.

To set this up, add a page to your site using one of the blank templates. In the Page Inspector, click on the Layout tab and change the Content Width setting to 775px (you can adjust this later if you like). Choose Insert: HTML Snippet, and in the resulting dialog box, type `<iframe`



src="your-ical-url" style="width:100%;height:100%;border:none;"></iframe>. Replace your-ical-url with the URL for your published iCal calendar. Finally, use the Metrics Inspector to resize the snippet to 775px wide and 1100px tall. Your iCal calendar will appear on your web site and will automatically update as you make changes.

Domain.sites2

Separate your sites. You can easily create multiple web sites in iWeb by pressing ⌘-shift-N. However, because iWeb stores all of your site assets in one file, you can't update sites separately — each time you make a change, you'll have to wait for iWeb to re-export all your sites.

To work around this problem, open your user folder and navigate to /Library/Application Support/iWeb. You'll see a Domain.sites2 file (or just Domain, if you've hidden file extensions), which holds all the information for your sites. In the iWeb folder, create a new folder for each site you want to manage, and place a copy of the Domain.sites2 file in each folder. To switch between your iWeb sites, you'll need to quit iWeb, open the folder for the new site, and double-click on the Domain.sites2 file.

Find it in a hurry. If you need to find a particular line of text on a web page you're editing, press ⌘-F, type in the search term, and click on Find. To find the next occurrence, press ⌘-G. To find a previous occurrence, use ⌘-shift-G.

Create templates. Once you've set up your web page exactly the way you want it, why not use this page design for other parts of your site? iWeb doesn't let you set up your own templates, but you can work around this limitation. Create a new site (⌘-shift-N). In the Site Inspector, give the site a name like My Templates. Now select the page you want to use as a template, and press c-D to duplicate it. Drag the duplicated file into your template site and rename it. Now, whenever you need that page design, simply duplicate it again, drag the duplicated page into the desired spot in your site, and start editing.

Microsoft Reader tip

Fix your voice

If you record your voice with the tempo of the backing track set to a certain value you can expect to have problems when you subsequently change the tempo. Indeed you see the length of the real audio track vary against the other clips.

However, if you take the tempo up to maximum a few times a pane drops down showing a conversion of this track to another form and the length drops back to what it was when recorded. Then any change of tempo changes your voice to be quicker or slower.

There is a keyboard shortcut to do this with imported audio clips but I haven't seen anything similar for your own recorded clips.

Tony Falla
Castlemaine, Victoria

Each month, Microsoft gives a free Notebook Optical Mouse valued at $70 to the Australian Macworld *reader who submits the best tip. Sized for mobility and designed to be noticed, Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse 3000 offers great comfort for either hand and is always good to go. E-mail your tip, together with your name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au All reader tips published become the sole property of Niche Media.*

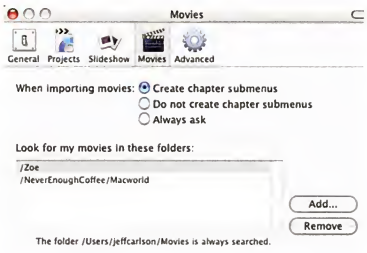
iDVD.

With movies, photos, songs, and sound effects, your Mac is a treasure trove of media files. Learn how to use these goodies to give your next DVD project professional polish — *Jeff Carlson*

Import any iMovie clip. Because iMovie '08 keeps track of all your video, you can grab any clip that you've imported, even if you're not using it in a movie project. Open the Movies tab of iDVD's Media pane, expand the Event Library item, and then select one of the thumbnails that appear. To use just a small portion of a longer clip, add the clip to a drop zone, click on the drop zone in the menu, and then use the Movie Start and Movie End sliders to adjust length.

Hide and seek. To keep the Media pane up-to-date, iDVD monitors the likeliest locations for movie files on your hard drive. If you store your video clips elsewhere — for example, on an external hard drive — you can

clue iDVD in. Open iDVD's Movies preference pane, and click on the Add button to specify a new location. When you return to the Media pane, you'll see a new Folders option in the Movies section.



Change the background music. You probably already know that you can replace a theme's default background music with a song from your iTunes library — but that's not your only option. You can also use the audio from one of your video clips. Instead of dragging a video file from the Media pane to the Menu well (which sets it as the menu's background video), drag the clip to the Audio well in the Inspector (View: Show Inspector). Don't want any music at all? To mute the default tune quickly, click on the Edit Drop Zones button, and then click on the speaker icon in the middle of the Menu well.

Find more sounds. iLife provides a rich library of audio tracks, including scratching records, a cheering crowd, and the ambient sounds of city streets and the ocean. You can't access these sound effects from within iDVD (unless you build a song in GarageBand first), but they're easy to locate on your hard drive. In the Finder, go to Library: Audio: Apple Loops: Apple: iLife Sound Effects. Choose a file and drag it into the iDVD menu or the Inspector's Audio well.

Make a list. By default, the Media pane displays movies and photos as thumbnails. But if you find these thumbnails hard to navigate, you can switch to a list view. Simply control-click in the pane's preview area, and choose Display As List from the contextual menu. To choose which columns appear in the list view, control-click again and choose Show Columns.

Get an accurate preview. iDVD's preview mode gives you a good idea of how your project will look when played by a DVD player, but what you're seeing is still original footage — it's not encoded as it would be on a DVD. To get a better sense of the quality of the finished product, without burning lots of discs, create a disc image. From the File menu, choose Save As Disc Image (or press c-shift-R). iDVD goes through the entire process of encoding the content, except the final step of burning a disc. When iDVD finishes, double-click on the .img file that was created; this mounts the file as a volume on your desktop.

Launch DVD Player (from the Applications folder) and choose File: Open DVD Media. Locate the VIDEO_TS folder in the disc image, and watch your project unspool. If the project looks good, you can then burn a DVD from the Finder without having to re-encode your project in iDVD.

Garage Band.

From new settings to hidden displays, these helpful hints will keep you in tune with Apple's music studio.

— Christopher Breen

Display chords. Wonder what chord you're playing on your MIDI keyboard, or on your Mac's keyboard when you're using the Musical Typing window? GarageBand will tell you. While you're playing into a Software Instrument track, select Chord from the LCD display. As you play, GarageBand spells out the chord name for you.

Adjust transitions. You can set GarageBand '08 to reduce the volume of a background track automatically when another track starts playing. If the volume changes seem too abrupt, you can fine-tune them. Choose Track: Show Master Track, and press ⌘-I to display the Track Info pane. Open the Details section, and use the Ducker pull-down menu to select the speed and degree of volume change. You can also select Manual to configure the Ducker settings as you like.

Scroll for better control. Tired of clicking on all those sliders and control knobs in GarageBand's interface? If your mouse has a scroll wheel, you can simply hover the cursor over a

slider or control and, in most cases, adjust it by moving the scroll wheel — no clicking required.

Locate additional loops. Can't find the Real Instrument loops you want? Try a different key. Choose Control: Show Loop Browser, and select Project from the LCD display. Click on the Key entry and choose a different key from the pop-up menu — one that's a few whole steps away from the current key.

The available loops should change. (This is because loops are recorded for specific key ranges.)

Lock curves to clips. In previous versions of GarageBand, you had to redraw customised volume curves each time you moved the audio to a different place in the timeline — a common problem for podcasters. No more. Just select Control: Lock Automation Curves To Regions.

Get better quality (not always best). In the Advanced tab of GarageBand's preferences is the Audio Resolution pop-up menu, which lets you choose Good, Better, or Best quality. Be careful about using Best (24-bit) quality, as iTunes is incapable of converting the resulting files to mono MP3 (a format popular with podcasters) or AAC files. For exported podcasts, use the Good quality setting instead.

Hotlinks

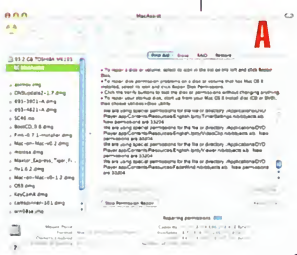
discussions.apple.com/category.jspa?categoryID=235
Apple's Leopard discussion forums
www.adobe.com/support
Adobe's Knowledgebase

Upgrade to Leopard painlessly

I am running 10.3.9 on a G5 iMac, and also a Titanium PowerBook G4. I use Adobe InDesign CS and Final Cut Pro HD as well as Dreamweaver MX 2004. If I upgrade to Leopard will I still be able to run all these apps or will I have to upgrade to the latest flavours?

Will the upgrade be painless? And how about all the other little apps I have grown to love - will there be a place for them in 10.5?

John Kelly,
Norfolk Island, NSW



Leopard compatibility is a bit of a lucky dip, as with any major upgrade — some old applications will just work, others will require an update or upgrade.

I know for a fact that InDesign CS works, as I used it just the other day. I haven't tried Final Cut Pro HD and DreamWeaver MX 2004 — you may need to check the support pages for those products, or the discussions forums on the Apple and Adobe sites.

I have had very few programs not work out of the box, but there will be holdouts. Some things to note about Leopard is that Classic is not supported any more, so you can't run any Mac OS 9 applications when booted in Mac OS X, even on PowerPC machines which support booting directly into Mac OS 9.

It's also worth doing a Repair Permissions in Disk Utility before starting the repair process **A**, and then again when the computer restarts after the installation.

I've also seen it noted that it's best to click on the Options button when you're selecting the disk to install Leopard onto, and choose the Archive and Install option (with the "Keep Users and Network Settings" option ticked) to have the best possible install, and to download the 110MB Mac OS X v10.5.1 updater from the Apple site, rather than use Software Update.

One last note is that Leopard won't install on a machine slower than 867MHz, so you'll need to check the specs of your Titanium PowerBook G4 to make sure it makes the grade. With both computers, it'll be worthwhile making sure they have at least 1GB of RAM, as that will help Leopard make the most of whatever hardware it finds itself on. You can get information about the speed of your processor and the amount of RAM in your machine by choosing "About This Mac" from the Apple menu **B**. — *Sean McNamara*

Keep memory cards performing their best — part two

Hotlinks

www.lc-tech.com/photorecovery.htm
Photorecovery
www.lc-tech.com/rescuepro.htm
SanDisk RescuePro
www.file-rescue.com
File Rescue
www.lexarmedia.com/drivers/index.html
Image Rescue works only with Lexar cards.
www.datarescue.com/photorescue
PhotoRescue
www.imagerecall.com
ImageRecall 2
www.mediarecover.com
MediaRECOVER
www.xyber.com.au
Xyber for data recovery

With digital cameras it helps to play your cards right! SD cards, Compact Flash, xD-Picture Cards and all the flavours of Memory Stick — they all have similar structures and it's wise to follow some guidelines in their use. To give you a jolt and make sure you take on board my advice, here's some real life cases of disaster, pain and crisis. It can happen to the best of us.

Busted. Early in 2004 NASA sent a pair of Mars Exploration Rovers to Mars. The vehicles carried digital cameras to take pictures to be sent back to Earth; the planetary wanderers were equipped with three types of memory: 128MB of RAM as well as 256MB of flash RAM plus erasable programmable memory (EPROM).

After 18 days on Mars, one of them faltered and stopped sending the images and other data earthwards, continually re-booting its computer. The cause of the breakdown was not widely promoted.

When the Rover went on the blink it suddenly acted erratically and refused to transmit science and engineering data. After studying telemetry from the Rover, trouble-shooters identified a problem with the computer's use of flash RAM. The culprits? Flash memory and software.

The manager of the Rover project glumly commented that "Flash RAM is just like the memory in a digital camera. It can also be read to and written from easily", adding that it has non-volatile characteristics: the stored information remains even if the vehicle is powered down.

The Rover was placed in "cripple mode", it was necessary to step around the flash memory and directly access the RAM. This avoided any issues with the flash memory itself.

Good news. When an explosion was set to bring down an old bridge on the Mississippi River a newspaper photographer was so close his digital pro level camera was blown to bits. But, to the photographer's amazement, the SanDisk 256 MB Compact-Flash card was unscathed, except for a few nicks, even though it had been blasted from the camera chamber. Inserting it into a card reader, the image on the card recorded the last second of the camera's existence and could be used.

Tips. To keep on top of the game it helps to follow these tips to maintain a card's health and preserve your precious images.

- Reformat the card in your camera each time, after you have downloaded the images to your computer.
- Deleting the images on your card while it is in your computer after downloading is not the same thing as reformatting the card in your camera.
- Never load nor remove a card during the image transfer process.
- Never force a card into a camera.
- Always handle your memory card by its edges. Don't touch the card's contact points. Keep them away from dust and moisture. Don't bend or twist the card.
- Always turn off the camera's power before you load the card or take it out.
- When using a card reader always move the icon of the card to the trash, then wait a few moment before removing the card from the reader.
- Don't let your camera batteries run out of charge. If power fails while data is being written to the card both the card and the data may be damaged.
- Keep away from any high static charges, strong magnetic charges and extreme heart and cold — and be very careful when handling cards in dry, low humidity zones.
- Before editing the images, always transfer them to the hard drive.

Help! Of course if the unthinkable happens, there is help available in the form of software utilities — see "Hotlinks" for a selection. If you can't afford to trust software to save your pics, try a data-recovery service like Xyber in St Leonards NSW. — *Barrie Smith*

Hotlinks

www.iana.org/assignments/port-numbers
Internet Assigned Numbers Authority
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TCP_and_UDP_port
Wikipedia on certain specialised ports
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network_address_translation
Wikipedia on NAT

New to the Mac? Start here

Understand network ports

I find one of the hardest concepts in networking for new computer users to wrap their head around is the concept of networking ports — and I'm not talking about the hardware ports on the side or back of your computer. I'm looking at software ports, which are fundamental to the operation of the internet.

Every computer on the internet has an IP address, a computer-friendly number-based address like 5.1.126.20. Each of the four numbers can be between 0 and 255, and there are ranges of addresses reserved for use on private networks (generally those on the user's side of a router or modem). When you type in www.apple.com into a browser, this human- readable address is converted into the server's IP address using the Domain Name System (DNS) servers.

At the most basic level, you can think of ports as a sub-address, which can have a value of between 0 and 65535. When coupled with an IP address, the port is separated from the rest of the address with a colon (eg 5.1.126.20:80 means port 80 at IP address 5.1.126.20).

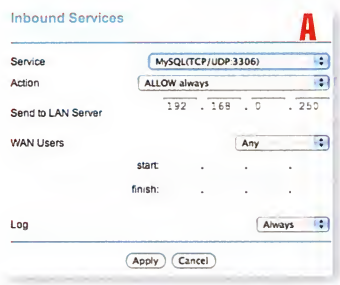
When a packet of information arrives at a computer (or router) on the internet, it looks at the port and compares it to the list of ports it knows what to do with. The use of ports means a computer doesn't have to look at the information inside a data packet to determine what to do with it, it just hands it over to the program that knows what to do with it.

For computers, that means it looks at any server programs it has running (web server software, file sharing services, etc.) and the ports they handle — if the port is handled by a running program, the data is handed to that program and it processes it. Certain services have default ports they operate over (such as port 80 for web servers), although they can be configured to respond to any port. If the server is using the default port, the port doesn't have to be typed in (as is the case with almost all web servers people generally access).

For example, when a packet arrives at a computer with IP address 5.1.126.20 and port 80, the computer looks for any programs handling that port, and, if a default web server is running on the machine it has flagged that it handles port 80 and is therefore given the packet to process.

Routers are slightly different — they will either handle the data themselves (if, for example, they have a built-in web-based configuration server) or they will have been configured to pass certain ports on to particular computers on the private side of the network. This is how web servers behind routers, which are usually invisible to the internet, are able to respond over whichever port/s they've been configured to handle.

Firewalls introduce another aspect to the handling of ports.
Firewalls can be configured to filter IP addresses and/or ports (or combinations of them) selectively, to help protect the network **A**. For example, a firewall may block all access to file sharing ports except from certain computers it's been told about.



A list of pre-defined port numbers and their associated services can be found at the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority web site (see "Hotlinks"). Wikipedia also has some information on the concepts underlying the use of ports (see "Hotlinks").

Ports are also how routers can share a single IP address between all the computers on their network. Routers assign each outgoing connection its own external IP address and a random port in the high range, and when the data comes back in reply to that outgoing connection, the router looks up its internal list of assigned random ports and the computers they relate to then passes the data back to the requesting computer. This is called "Network Address Translation (see "Hotlinks").

Coverage of UDP and TCP is beyond the scope of this article, but suffice it to say that they are protocols which allow for different types of conversations between computers and devices on the internet. The article on Wikipedia can tell you more if you're interested.

— Sean McNamara

Manage addresses in Mail and Entourage

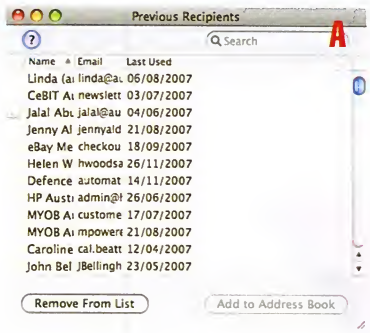
STM Query of the month

When you start typing an e-mail (in Entourage and Mail.app), addresses popup that you have typed before (some are not in your Address Book). Where do these e-mail addresses live?
Guy Mainwaring
Brighton, Vic.

Entourage and Mail both keep track of recently used e-mails so that you get the handy feature of not having to type in the whole e-mail address, even if the address is not in your Address Book.

However, these recently used e-mail addresses can start to build up, and it can be useful to clear them out every now and then. I've not seen any coverage anywhere about how to clear them up selectively in Entourage, only how to clear the whole list.

In Entourage, open the Preferences then go to the Compose sub-section — in there you can click on the "Clear List" button near the option to "Display a list of recently used addresses when addressing messages". If you don't want this functionality at all, just untick that tickbox.



Mail does have the capacity to remove addresses from the list selectively, or to add addresses on the list to the Address Book — select Previous Recipients from the Window menu in Mail, and it becomes very clear how to do housekeeping on this list **A**. — *Sean McNamara*

Hotlinks

www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosx1051update.html
Leopard.1 updater

Solve Leopard upgrade issues

I have upgraded to Leopard on its release date which is the first time I have ever done this with anything and I'm starting to question this move.

Since doing this I have had a couple of issues with it and have just not been able to fix any of them. I have done a clean install with no luck and have the same issues on two different Macs.

Both these Macs (a MacBook and an iMac) have different software on them. One of the biggest problems I'm having is I can't repair my permissions regardless if I start up from the Leopard DVD or not. This issue has only started since upgrading to Leopard.

I have also found that quitting out of some programs I can only do this on the second try as it doesn't work the first time.

I'm also finding that my WiFi signals seem to be lower and now I find the MacBook is turning itself off while there is still charge in the battery (around the 30 percent mark). Again this has only started up since upgrading to Leopard.
Paul Hadlow
Werribee, Vic.

There have been widespread reports of Permissions errors in Leopard, and this is due to two factors.

The first is that there are some minor issues with using the Repair Permissions function in Leopard. The second is that with the internet, the reporting of these errors may well magnify the apparent degree of the problem occurring.

Although it is good troubleshooting practice to repair permissions semi-regularly, the problems occurring in Leopard won't stop your machine functioning normally.

I have read (and it's my experience) that downloading the 110MB 10.5.1 updater from the Apple site (see "Hotlinks") rather than using Software Update will eliminate most, if not all, of the remaining permissions errors reported by Disk Utility.

As for the other issues, I'm pretty sure an update at some point will fix them, and you may well find the 10.5.1 update fixes some or all of them — it's certainly worth a try.

I also updated my machine on the first day, and I have had few problems. Other Macs I have updated since have also not experienced any major issues. I think if some of your issues start to be cleared up you will be more than satisfied with your upgrade. — *Sean McNamara*

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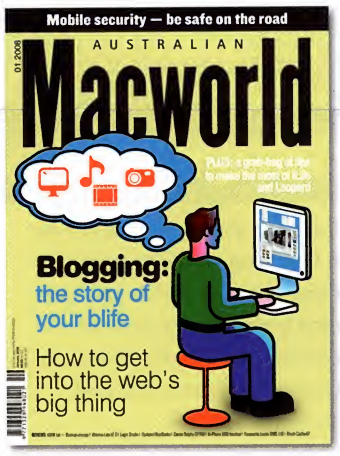

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Hotlinks

www.rogueamoeba.com/nicecast
Nicecast
www.live365.com
Streaming server

How to: Stream Your Music

With the wide availability and affordability of broadband internet, every Mac user now has the potential to run their own radio station. All it takes is some very cheap software and your own music, or music you can legally broadcast. Here's how:

1. Download and install Nicecast (see Hotlinks). It will run on OS X 10.3.9 to 10.4.11 with a Leopard version on its way.
2. Click on the Source button and select where you want your audio to come from – iTunes is the most likely source.
3. Click on the Start Broadcast button and you're on the air.

It sounds simple but there are a couple of catches. First, you may find the URL supplied by Nicecast doesn't work when you test it. The most likely reason is your router's firewall. Some instruction is given in the Nicecast help files but you'll need to delve into your router's instructions to ensure the correct ports are forwarded so people can access your audio stream. Second, the number of listeners that can tune in will be limited by the speed of your broadband connection and the quality of the stream you're broadcasting. Quality settings in Nicecast can be adjusted to minimise bandwidth but this comes at the expense of the audio itself.

If you'd prefer not to use your Mac as the broadcast server, there are numerous streaming services that will allow you to upload your music direct to their servers and they then take care of the streaming. Live 365 is one of the most popular. A free trial is available and pricing starts at $US 9.95 US per month. The more expensive plans allow for multiple gigabytes of audio to be stored and more than a hundred listeners can be streaming your audio simultaneously. I know of people that cover their monthly fees by offering advertising and broadcasting in a particular musical niche though this opens up the possibility of you needing to pay royalties to cover the artists you are broadcasting. If it's a non-commercial venture, the hosting fees usually include the royalty component – check the provider's documentation for details.

If you have a couple of friends you want to impress with a broadcast the Nicecast and your own Mac should suffice. If you have greater aspirations then it's never been easier to hit the airwaves.

— David Holloway

Launch any app in seconds

The Dock is great as a place to stash your most commonly-used applications so you can get to them in an instant — but you wouldn't want to fill it with every app you own. You should use Disk Utility to repair permissions each time you do a software update, but that doesn't mean you want it cluttering up the Dock, does it?

If you're using Leopard, you'll find that Spotlight has become an absolutely brilliant program launcher. Simply click on the magnifying glass icon (or press ⌘-[space bar]) to open Spotlight, then type in the first couple of letters if the application you want to launch. By default, the first thing Spotlight will find is applications that fit your search criteria so there, at the top of the search results, will be the name of the app you want, already highlighted.

Then hit return, and you're off and running. *— Matthew JC. Powell*

Hotlinks

www.macosxhints.com
Rob Griffiths's site where we found this tip

Add recent stuff to the Dock

One of the most useful yet neglected features of Mac OS has always been its ability to keep track of recently used items such as applications and documents so you ca get back to them in a flash by going to the Apple menu in the upper left corner of the screen. There you'll find (in recent versions of the OS at least) an item called "Recent Items" — click on it, and a list of recently used applications, documents and servers pops down.

Very nifty, but not exactly in your face, is it? What if those same items were accessible from, say, the Dock? Funny you should ask.

Open the Terminal application (see the other tip this issue about opening applications quickly to see a nifty shortcut for doing so) and type `defaults write com.apple.dock persistent-others -array-add '{ "tile-data" = { "list-type" = 1; }; "tile-type" = "recents-tile"; }'` then hit return. Then type `killall Dock` and hit return again, which will restart the Dock.

Then you should see a Stack in the Dock which (by default) contains the icons of your most recently-used applications (whether or not they were already on the Dock). Right-click or control-click on the Stack to pull out a menu that lets you choose whether the Stack contains recently-used applications, documents, servers, favourite volumes or favourite items.

You can even run the Terminal command multiple times to create multiple Stacks, and designate each of them to a different category of content.

— Matthew JC. Powell

Hotlinks

www.infrant.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=71856
Further discussion on the topic

Make Time Machine see unsupported drives

Before Mac OS X 10.5 was released, Apple touted the ability of its Time Machine automated backup feature to use hard drives shared over networks. When Leopard actually landed, though, the feature was mysteriously gone, as was any mention of it on Apple's web site.

Interestingly, the feature is actually there, it's just hidden. There are probably good reasons for its absence — multi-gigabyte backups choking the life out of consumer-grade networks, that kind of thing — but if you're brave you can recover it from the Cupertino cutting-room floor.

The trick is just to make Time Machine see all the drives that your computer can see, not just the ones Apple says it can use. The way to do that is to open the Terminal and type in `defaults write com.apple.systempreferences TMShowUnsupportedNetworkVolumes 1` and hit return.

Next time you open up Time Machine you'll see drives there that were not there before — including network volumes. Then you just set these drives up to use Time Machine just like any directly-connected drive.

Of course, it's altogether possible that the sensible reasons Apple had for not making this feature available to everyone apply to you in particular. If you discover that your network is constantly overloaded because it takes an hour to complete the hourly backup, you'll want to switch off the unsupported volumes access.

In that case, open the terminal again and type `defaults delete com.apple.systempreferences TMShowUnsupportedNetworkVolumes` then hit return. Now your Time machine will look exactly as Apple intended it to.

A word of warning: while I've speculated above about the reason for Apple not including support for network volumes in Time Machine, I might be wrong. It could well be that the feature is buggy and actually doesn't work, in which case using this tip runs the risk of losing your data. That would somewhat defeat the purpose of a backup.

— Matthew JC. Powell

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Keith White
has been a Mac addict since 1984 and can't fathom why anyone isn't.

Lasso that Leopard

Author Joe Kissell
Publisher TidBITS Publishing
ISBN 1-933671-25-4
RRP $US10.00

Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard shows you the best ways to install, troubleshoot problems, and even revert to your previous system if that's what you want. You'll learn in detail exactly what each installation option entails (and what it doesn't) and how to restore missing files. There are plenty of practical tips and answers to questions like: Will my model Mac and peripherals work with Leopard? Do I need to partition my hard disk before upgrading? Which files aren't copied by Archive and Install? Does Leopard need new versions of my utilities? What should I do if my Mac won't boot under Leopard?

Author Matt Neuburg
Publisher TidBITS Publishing
ISBN 1-933671-27-0
RRP $US10.00

Take Control of Customizing Leopard provides a tour of new and upgraded features in Leopard. Learn how to use the dramatically-improved Spotlight interface, set Finder windows to open the way you want, configure Open and Save dialogs and arrange items on your toolbar for quick access.

This is for you if you want to know: What are the major new features in Leopard? How can I change my work habits to get more out of Leopard? How do I customise my Time Machine backups? What's the best way to use Spotlight to find files on my disk? How can Leopard help me keep my Desktop tidy? How do I assign keyboard shortcuts to menu items?

Author Kirk McElhearn
Publisher TidBITS Publishing
ISBN 1-933671-31-9
RRP $US10.00

Take Control of Users & Accounts in Leopard explains different types of accounts in Leopard, how to share files between accounts, and what limitations Leopard's parental controls can set.

You'll learn how to create the right types of accounts for the different people who share your Mac and why you should have at least two accounts. Learn also how to set up a dedicated troubleshooting account to solve problems, use Fast User Switching, share files between users and manage login and startup items. There's even tricks for sharing music and photos among multiple users on your Mac with iTunes and iPhoto.

Questions covered include: Why do I have to log in anyway? How can people log in and log out more easily? What's the difference between a login item and a startup item? What's the purpose of an Administrator account? How do I limit the time of day when my children can use the Mac? Can I control who my child communicates with by e-mail?

Take Control of Sharing Files in Leopard makes file sharing easy between two Macs, among a mixed-platform office workgroup, a home network, or between computers on the internet. You'll get help with selecting and configuring the right hardware and software for your budget and needs and understand the pros and cons of different file-sharing options.

Author Glenn Fleishman
Publisher TidBITS Publishing
ISBN 1-933671-33- 5
RRP $US10.00

Includes answers to: What's the best technique for me to share my files? How do I set up my Mac as a file server? What's the best way to connect to a file server from my Mac? What types of security should I set up? Do I need a firewall? How can I restrict what users can do after they log in?

Author Sharon Zardetto
Publisher TidBITS Publishing
ISBN 1-933671-26-2
RRP $US15.00

Take Control of Fonts in Leopard explains everything Mac users need to know about fonts in Mac OS X generally but with a sharp focus on Leopard's new and updated fonts, font activation capabilities, font previewing, and font sample printing. Learn where your fonts live, in what order they load, and how to deal with font duplication.

Learn the answers to questions such as: What types of fonts can I use with Leopard? What is automatic font activation and how does it work? In what order does Leopard access fonts from all their possible locations? Which fonts is it OK to remove from my system? How can I reduce font-related problems when sharing documents across platforms?

Hotlinks

www.takecontrolbooks.com
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REVIEWS

Large-capacity backup drives

The heart of your Time Machine

View your options, make your choices. *Australian Macworld* puts latest-release hardware and software through its paces.

YOU have way too much stuff on your Mac, but you can't chuck it away – it's important stuff. Well, you suspect it's important but there's just too much stuff to go through and check. You need somewhere to put all this stuff so you can make room for more new stuff. Like more digital photos – your new digicam takes bigger pictures than your old one. And more music – you keep ripping CDs at this rate and you'll be out of room by tomorrow. And more movies – good grief, the kids are downloading movies from their phones.

Many readers have probably already got a backup drive. So the drives you read about here are likely to be additions to your existing drive. Or drives. Or maybe you need to totally upgrade your older drive to one of these newer drives. Why would you do that? Why not just keep the old and the new? Speed and size. Speed and size. This crop of drives holds more files and they dish them out faster.

The speed factor. They work fast because they use SATA drives, the same speedy type as the ones found in the latest Macintoshes, and they also have faster interfaces. All the network attached drives we tested, which let you access the drive from any Mac in the home or office, operate at 1000Mbps often – referred to as GigaLAN. If you have a recent Macintosh you'll notice it also has GigaLAN built-in. Now if all you've been doing is downloading files from the internet, which has a top speed to homes in the very best locations of about 20Mbps, then you won't have noticed how fast your Mac can really transfer stuff.

The first generation of network backup storage had 100Mbps Ethernet, but that's not even as fast as USB 2 or FireWire, which can both claim 400Mbps. The latest Macs have FireWire 800 which, you guessed it, can hit 800Mbps. If you want your network attached drive to match or exceed the speed of a directly attached backup drive then you'll need GigaLAN. And that means you're going to need a new network switch as well as one of these new backup boxes. Fortunately, these network storage devices still work fine over an ordinary 100BaseT network, just ten times more slowly. And the other good news is that GigaLAN switches now cost less than $100.

Of course, if you've got a WiFi network you're not going to come close to the available speed of these network storage boxes. Your theoretical maximum is 108Mbps with WiFi using the latest technological trickery, but actual throughput is likely to be a quarter of that speed. If you want to move many files in a hurry you need a cable. If you're in no hurry you can just leave it copying overnight. This strategy works fine for archiving and backups, but not so fine for watching the latest video.

For those of you who have upgraded to Leopard, aka OS X 10.5, you probably want to use your storage box to save backups from Apple's Time Machine software. If that's what you plan to do, you need to use a directly attached drive, not a network drive, because Time Machine can't see anything that lives on the network. For those brave enough, there is a workaround for this limitation, which can be found on page 60. For those

RATINGS KEY
Outstanding
Very good
Good
Flawed
Unacceptable
Dangerous

	NETGEAR READYNAS NV+ 1000GB	BUFFALO LINKSTATION LIVE 320GB	MAXTOR ONE TOUCH 4PLUS 500GB
Type	Large-capacity backup drive	Large-capacity backup drive	Large-capacity backup drive
Rating	♦♦♦♦♦	♦♦♦♦½	♦♦♦♦½
Pros	Room for four drives, backup software, iTunes server, print server	iTunes server, print server	Built-in backup, 5-year warranty
Cons	Fans a bit loud	None	None
Ports	GigaLAN, 3x USB	GigaLAN, 2x USB	USB, 2x FW400
SRP	$2099	$429	$269
Distributor	Netgear 02 8448 2072	Uniden Australia 02 9599 3355	Maxtor Australia 1800 147 201
Reviewer	Ian Yates	Ian Yates	Ian Yates
Hot links	www.netgear.com.au	www.buffalo-asia.com	www.maxtorsolutions.com/en

not willing to deviate from the standard as supplied by Apple, no doubt the next release of Time Machine will support network drives. If not, a raft of third-party software vendors will quickly appear to fill this gaping chasm.

On test. The storage drives we looked at fall almost neatly into two camps. Network and non-network. In the non-network but directly attached camp was Maxtor's One Touch 4plus, LaCie's Ethernet Disk Mini and Silicon Memory's Taurus RAID. In the network attached camp you'll find Netgear's ReadyNAS NV+, Uniden's Bufalo LinkStation Live, Silicon Memory's Taurus LAN and LaCie's Ethernet Disk Mini. Now you know why we said "almost neatly". The LaCie drive can operate as both a network drive and appears as thought it can also be a USB-attached drive. That should mean it is visible to Time Machine.

Unfortunately this is not the case. One USB port on the LaCie is for adding additional storage, and the other USB port is for attaching to Macs that aren't on the network – but it operates by appearing to be an Ethernet port to your Macintosh when connected. This means it would be quite handy for plugging in a laptop that isn't part of the network, but it won't get around Time Machine's insistence on directly-attached drives, since the LaCie still appears as though it is on a network, despite being connected via USB cable.

You'll notice from the tables that all the other network drives also have USB ports on the back, but they are not there for you to plug into your Macintosh. No, those ports are there to let you add even more storage, of the USB-attached kind, to your network drive. You can also add a printer to the USB port of the Buffalo, Taurus LAN and Netgear drives, to share with other Macs. The LaCie doesn't perform this printer-sharing trick, but can still have additional storage attached and shared via its USB port. The other major difference between the storage boxes is the number of disks hidden under the covers. The Netgear can have four drives inside while both Taurus offerings have room for two drives. These drives can be set up just to provide more space or they can be configured for insurance against disk drive crashes by mirroring each other in the case of the Taurus units, or running RAID 5 on the Netgear unit.

With the Taurus or Netgear with two internal disks set as mirrors of each other you only get access to the capacity of one drive, with the security blanket of still being able to access your data if one of the drives fails. If you install one or more additional drives into the Netgear you have the capacity of all but one of the drives available for storage, with the security that should any single drive fail, you will still be able to access your data – and you can plug-in a new drive without even having to turn off the power first. The Netgear also comes with built-in backup software that is activated by attaching an external USB drive to the port on the front panel and pressing the button next to the port. This doesn't backup your Macintosh, it backs up what's in the folder named "backup" on the Netgear drive.

Setting up these drives on the network is simply a matter of applying power, connecting an Ethernet cable and launching Safari (or your favourite browser) to access the administration web page built in to the drive. From there you can easily add the names of users you want to have access, and you can also create "shares"

LACIE ETHERNET DISK MINI 500GB
Large-capacity backup drive
4½
Network and direct connect
Direct connect emulates network
GigaLAN, 2x USB
$359
LaCie Australia 02 9669 6900
Ian Yates
www.lacie.com/au

TAURUS LAN 640GB
Large-capacity backup drive
4½
Can be mirrored, print server
Fans a bit loud
GigaLAN, 2x USB
$619
Silicon Memory Technologies 02 9417 7822
Ian Yates
www.siliconmemory.com.au

TAURUS RAID 640GB
Large-capacity backup drive
4½
Can be mirrored, FireWire 800 port
Fans a bit loud
USB, FW400, 2x FW800
$569
Silicon Memory Technologies 02 9417 7822
Ian Yates
www.siliconmemory.com.au

for them to store their stuff. These built-in web pages also let you configure any USB-connected printers or additional storage. For the directly attached Maxtor and Taurus RAID all you need do is plug them in and connect a USB or FireWire cable and they then appear on the desktop. You'll need to load the software that comes with the Maxtor if you want to take advantage of the backup button on the front of the drive. There's also software included with the Netgear to help locate the drive on your network and the included CD contains a copy of Retrospect backup software.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you want to use Time Machine for backups and you don't want to apply the workaround then your only choice is directly attached. And if you're using Time Machine you probably don't want the backup software that comes with the Maxtor. For Leopard users and those who already have their own backup software and like the security of disk mirroring, the Taurus RAID makes good sense. For the rest of us and for Leopard users who don't want to use Time Machine, the Maxtor has all you need right out of the box including push-button backup. For those who want to share their extra storage across several Macs, you can start with low-cost LaCie or Buffalo, step-up to the added redundancy of the not much more expensive Taurus LAN or go the whole hog with the quad-disk Netgear ReadyNAS NV+.

ABLETON LIVE LE 6	
Type	Digital Audio Workstation
Rating	♦♦♦♦½
Pros	One-screen intuitive interface, excellent tutorials and online help
Cons	Limited sample library supplied
OS X	10.2.8 or later
SRP	$250
Publisher	Ableton
Distributor	Musiclink Australia 03 9765 6565
Reviewer	David Holloway
Hot links	www.ableton.com

Ableton Live LE 6

IN a heavily saturated market for digital audio applications, Ableton's Live grew through its unique user interface. On its launch in 2001 there was nothing quite like it – an application designed for performance from the ground up. Live is known for its two different workflow options: Arrangement View and Session view. Arrangement view is the traditional linear recording model where you create tracks and place your audio on each track in the chronological order you desire. Session view is the real power of Live – it's a non-linear option for you to drop in audio and then trigger it via your keyboard. mouse or MIDI device. Each cell on the Session grid can contain an audio loop, audio recording, complete song or a MIDI file. Each cell can then be triggered in any order and combined in any variation you choose, hence the appeal for live performance.

LE but not too light. Live LE 6 is a pared down version of Live 6. The main difference is the size of the projects you can create. If you can do what you need with 64 audio tracks, two mono audio inputs and four outputs, a maximum of eight Ableton instruments and twelve audio effects per project, then LE won't seem that light to you. Other missing features compared to the full version include Track Freezing, plug-in delay compensation, MIDI output to hardware synths and ReWire support. The key live performance capabilities are essentially untouched – if you have all your audio loaded on your Mac prior to the performance, the LE version won't hold you back much at all. A fully functional demo is available for download – the only limitation is the ability to export or save your work.

Creating. Live comes with a basic library of loops and has an easy to navigate loop browser similar to Cubase Sequel and Soundtrack Pro. All loops and MIDI files play when clicked on in the loop browser and adding them to either the Session or Arrangement views is a simple drag and drop exercise.

It's worth emphasising the creativity of the Session view again here. If you have many years of a linear arrangement approach under your belt, the Session view takes a little getting used to initially. After a couple of hours of experimenting with it however, I was hooked. It is just so simple to use that it's difficult not to create some fascinating music. It's the sort of approach that makes you ask yourself why you didn't do things this way before.

If you have a substantial collection of loops or other audio material, you'll find you new ways of utilising it within the Live interface. VST and AU plugin formats are supported although the LE version allows two instruments and two effects per project only.

Once your project is complete, a number of export formats are offered up to 32-bit, 192kHz sample rate. Aside from standard AIFF and WAV on export, Ogg Vorbis, MP3 and FLAC formats are supported in projects and MIDI data can also be exported, On my MacBook Pro with Leopard, Live LE 6 was pretty snappy in loading loops and during playback.

Lessons and Live Packs. One feature for which Ableton deserves particular kudos is Lessons. There's nothing particularly innovative about text-based tutorials but they are very tightly integrated into the workflow and are easy to follow. There's a small window on the bottom left that provides an explanation of features as you mouse over their buttons, which is great for that initial learning curve, and it can be switched off as you become confident.

Also very well integrated are the Live Packs. The Basics Pack comes with Live LE 6 and there are free Packs available from the Ableton web site including samplers, demo songs and further Lessons on more complex areas or features. All can be installed and uninstalled from within the application itself, something of which Ableton's competitors should take serious note.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you are looking to buy your first digital audio workstation application or you're looking for a different way to create music, Ableton Live LE 6 is attractive from either perspective. There are enough unique features to differentiate it from GarageBand and make the extra expenditure worthwhile. If live performance is your bailiwick, you have even more reason to give it serious consideration.

Logic Studio

Easier to use, more playable

LOGIC STUDIO	
Type	Music creation suite
Rating	♦♦♦♦½
Pros	Single-window view speeds editing and setup; MainStage program ideal for playing instruments and effects live; powerful, easy-to-access editing and take management tools; bundles Soundtrack Pro but halves the price; no more dongle; can sync with others via .Mac or Bonjour
Cons	Some MIDI features are still obscure; MainStage doesn't integrate with Logic or ReWire
OS X	10.4, 10.5
SRP	$649; upgrade pricing available
Publisher	Apple Inc.
Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
Reviewer	Peter Kirn
Hot links	www.apple.com/au/logicstudio

DIGITAL audio workstations (DAWs) have to do a lot: they typically record, mix, and edit audio, host instruments and effects, record and edit MIDI, arrange music, score videos, print notation, slice and stretch sound loops, and even provide programmable drum machines, acoustical simulators, and surround sound. It's easy to get immersed in all those features and lose track of actually making music. With new features constantly being added, is anyone cleaning house? Apple is. With Logic Studio, Apple has transformed Logic from a deep but difficult program into one of the most streamlined and elegant music environments of its kind.

Like Logic Pro 7, Logic Studio (with Logic Pro 8 as the core application) bundles the main sequencer/editor with powerful music and audio tools. It's packed with the same extensive lineup of audio effects and sound tools that were found in previous versions, including a guitar amp simulator and realistic reverb, organs and keyboards, various synthesisers, the Ultrabeat drum machine, the Sculpture instrument, the EXS24 mkII sampler, and even a CD authoring and mastering utility called WaveBurner. That, arguably, was more tools than any other single package, but Logic Studio now adds a hard drive-busting collection of Apple's music beds, Jam Packs, sound effects, and other content; the Soundtrack Pro audio editor; and a new application called MainStage. To describe the new bundled apps and the breadth of the package in general, Apple has changed the package name to Logic Studio (the Logic Pro app retains the old moniker).

In a move likely to please users, Apple has also done away with the hardware dongle, the small USB key that was required to operate the program; now only a serial number is needed when you first install the application. But the big difference in Logic may be not how much is in the package, but how easy it is to access those tools.

New look, new view. Logic Pro 8, the heart of the studio, has undergone an extensive interface redesign. There are cosmetic improvements throughout, but this isn't just a skin-deep upgrade: entire editing facilities have been streamlined or replaced, and a lot of Logic's strange terminology has been translated into standardised language. That may sound like bad news to existing users, but remarkably, Apple has managed to avoid sacrificing the application's core structure and functionality. Even long-time users may find themselves discovering existing features, simply because they're easier to access. Most importantly, this means you'll be making music when you launch, not half an hour later.

The most profound change in Logic Pro 8 is an entirely new Arrange window, a one-screen display of all the major recording, editing, mixing, and file and setting management features of Logic. You can still open separate windows if you like, but you now have access to most of the functionality of the program without worrying about switching views or dragging windows around. Tabs at the bottom of the screen expand editing panes for mixing, editing audio files, and viewing and editing MIDI information in Piano Roll, Score, or graphical views. A tabbed pane on the right provides access to the Audio Bin, Loop Browser, the file and project browser, and a Library pane for navigating presets for channel strips, instruments, effects, and other features.

There's a GarageBand-style template wizard, but you may not need it. Choose a blank template, and you can set up everything from simple to complex mix setups with just a few clicks. As each track is added, Logic automatically displays appropriate channel presets in the Library, so you can discover the program's deep set of sound tools and instruments, or get quick access to your own favorite settings. Basic instrument creation wasn't too difficult in Logic Pro 7, but using aux send channels (for effects and other processing) and ReWire (for integrating other applications, like Ableton Live or Propellerhead's Reason) has never been easier. Logic can now sync the Library with your other Macs or collaborators, using .Mac or Bonjour, a first for this kind of application.

Logic Pro 8 maintains the Environment, an under-the-hood facility for creating custom, modular audio and MIDI setups. But you no longer have to use the Environment to perform simple mixing and configuration tasks that are handled more efficiently by a standard interface.

Takes and editing. It's not just the interface that's different in Logic: Apple has reworked its editing features as well. You can now perform sample-accurate edits in the main Arrange window, with adjusted Snap tools and a reworked Ruler Bar to assist everything from audio edits to automation. New punch and multi-take facilities make recording audio and MIDI much easier, as well. You can easily merge multiple MIDI or audio sessions into a take; the interface is actually better integrated than the similar feature in Soundtrack Pro. Other Snap improvements, plus a new Junction facility for adjacent clips, make editing more precise.

Logic is deep, but there are still some odd imbalances absent in other DAWs. Aside from basic, non-destructive quantize (for tightening timing of MIDI tracks), there's no arpeggiator or real-time, non-destructive MIDI editing available unless you dive into the Environment. While the Transform window is capable of some powerful operations, it's tricky to use and performs only destructive edits.

Stage-ready rigs. If you want to play Logic's instruments and effects live onstage, you'll love MainStage, an application for hosting custom virtual racks of instruments and effects that's especially suited to keyboardists, guitarists, vocalists, and other musicians. Instead of working with Logic Pro onstage, this separate tool allows you to set up custom rigs for live use. As with the OnStage feature in Rax 2.0, there's a full-screen mode that you can view without hunching over your monitor, with shortcuts for switching sounds via the keyboard, MIDI, or an Apple Remote. You can use preset screen layouts and channel strips or build your own.

Channels support effects and instruments from Logic Pro and Audio Unit plug-ins. All of these features are perfectly geared for performance. Guitarists can bring up a full-screen tuner and easily tap through effects units; keyboardists can set up sophisticated splits and layers and switch and sculpt sounds. You can move from one preset to another with silky-smooth, no-glitch segues, even if you're holding down notes as you do so. That's something a lot of DAWs can't do. Combined with the collection of instruments and effects already in Logic, it's a great bargain.

If you just want a way to play instruments and effects, MainStage could be perfect – but it does have some limitations. There's inadequate functionality for people wanting to play backing tracks; you can use AppleScripts to trigger songs, but that requires a lot of manual setup, and won't allow automatic synchronisation of tempo-dependent effects and instruments, or jumping around within a song. There's no ReWire support, which means that you can't use it with other software tools, and you can't really integrate it with Logic projects beyond simple presets, either. And Apple didn't pick up on some of Rax's clever features, like displaying lyrics and notes for different songs.

More advanced users may want to consider tools like Ableton Live for their interactive clip-triggering features, or Native Instruments' KORE for a more sophisticated rack of instruments and effects with ReWire support. For everyone else, the depth of the instrument and effect set here, combined with an elegant interface for configuring and accessing those tools, makes MainStage a strong choice.

Surrounded by Studio improvements. There are too many improvements in Logic Studio to mention, and rather than being "me-too" features or bug fixes, they really do seem part of a clearly defined strategy to refine the application. The surround features, drawing from the work done on Soundtrack Pro, make production for surround sound far more powerful. Surround tools are integrated throughout the app, in file import, recording, bouncing (including direct bounce to DVD-A), mixing

Logic Express

Logic Express 8 is Apple's budget ($268) version of Logic Studio, and just as Logic Studio adds additional tools that Logic Pro didn't have, Logic Express 8 also has more out of the box than earlier versions. The Logic Express application has the same single-window design, editing and recording, video playback and scoring, music notation, and mobile sync features as Logic Pro. It also includes more instruments and effects than the previous release, with the full-blown EXS24 sampler, ES2 and EFM1 synths, Ultrabeat drum machine, and Guitar Amp Pro amp modeller, along with most of the effects included with Logic Studio.

What you'll miss are Logic Pro's surround capabilities and some of its more sophisticated tools, like the Sculpture synth and Space Designer and Delay Designer effects. More importantly, you won't get any of Logic Studio's bundled items, like the Jam Packs, MainStage performance app, Soundtrack Pro audio editor, and WaveBurner burning and mastering tool. If the main draw of Logic is the editing facility and you don't need all of those extras, or if you're on a budget, Express is a solid choice. But with Logic Pro at half its original price, the Studio upgrade may be worth it — especially if you want to work with surround sound or play live onstage.

and metering, channel strips, an intuitive new Surround Panner, and integrated encoding via Apple's Compressor. Many instruments and effects also get the Surround treatment, which is especially fun when working with the ES2 and Sculpture synths, Space Designer reverb, and new Delay Designer multi-tap delay.

While the instruments at first appear to be identical to those in Logic Pro 7, there are many smaller improvements, as well. The EXS24 mkII finally has a usable instrument editor; it's bare-bones in comparison to standalone samplers like Native Instruments' Kontakt, but it does make the EXS24 easier to edit. The Ultrabeat drum machine, while it retains its unusual interface, has a new full-view sequencer grid and step automation, plus support for EXS24 samples, making it far more useful. While the Delay Designer is also present in Soundtrack Pro, it really shines here; it's an extraordinary tool for creating multi-tap or custom delays that can change pitch and volume for all sorts of unique effects, from basic to far-out sound.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Logic Studio is extremely effective at providing an extensive tool kit and then getting out of your creative way. There are still some dated MIDI editing tools, and MainStage's lack of integration with Logic or ReWire restricts its use to some users. But the streamlined, fewer clicks-to-music philosophy throughout, combined with more precise tools for audio editing and surround, make this a landmark release. Logic Pro 7 already had more in one box than other sound composition tools; now it has still more with a 50 percent price reduction. But ultimately, having more isn't nearly as important as being more playable, and that's what Logic 8 does most successfully.

Live and in person. MainStage is a new tool for live performances. It lets you leave the main Logic application behind and focus on playing instruments and effects. Under the hood, sound transitions occur more smoothly than they might within a full host, while on the surface, the display is resized so you can see it easily while you play an instrument or sing.

MacBook Pro, Mac Pro

iPod touch, iPod classic, iPod nano, iPod shuffle

infinite systems

123 Charlotte St Brisbane · 07 3210 7400

http://www.infinitesystems.com.au/mw

Leopard, MacBook, iMac

Learn Final Cut Pro:
- FCP100 (2 days)
- FCP101 (3 days)
- FCP200 (5 days)

Apple Certified Final Cut Pro trainer on staff.

http://www.infinitesystems.com.au/training.html

	MACBOOK CORE 2 DUO/2GHZ	MACBOOK CORE 2 DUO/2.2GHZ (WHITE)
Type	Consumer portable computer	Consumer portable computer
Rating	4½	4½
Pros	Santa Rosa architecture; faster system bus; updated graphics chip; can handle 4GB of RAM; built-in 802.11n AirPort Extreme; excellent battery life	Santa Rosa architecture; faster system bus; updated graphics chip; can handle 4GB of RAM; built-in 802.11n AirPort Extreme; excellent battery life
Cons	ntegrated graphics performance limits gaming use; no SuperDrive	Integrated graphics performance limits gaming use
OS X	OS X	OS X
SRP	$1599	$1899
Publisher	Apple Inc	Apple Inc
Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622	Apple Australia 133 622
Reviewer	Jackie Dove	Jackie Dove
Hot links	www.apple.com/au/macbook	www.apple.com/au/macbook

MacBook Core 2 Duo/2GHz and 2.2GHz

Better overall performance and gaming

APPLE has once again updated its popular consumer laptop. The newest glossy-screened MacBooks look nearly identical to their six-month-old siblings, but a number of significant under-the-hood improvements have added new zip to this generation.

Let's start with speed: there's a modest difference if you just look at the numbers. The new high- and mid-range models now clock 2.2GHz, which slightly tops the previous generation's 2.16GHz speed. The low-end build is still 2GHz.

The new MacBooks also feature the newest chip architecture, a faster front side bus, an updated graphics processor, and increased RAM capacity – twice that recommended for the previous models. The new models have been upgraded from the Calistoga chipset architecture to the Santa Rosa architecture. This provides the platform on which the rest of the improvements depend.

For example, you can now install up to 4GB of RAM, up from a recommended maximum of 2GB in the previous models (Apple recommends matched RAM pairs for the MacBooks for the optimal performance); the front side bus has been increased to 800MHz from 667MHz; and the graphics chip has been updated to the Intel GMA X3100 with 144MB graphics allocation – the last generation had the Intel GMA 950 with 64MB. The MacBook's new graphics processors don't have dedicated video RAM, rather they share RAM with the main system memory, just like the previous models.

Features. While there's little to visually distinguish these MacBooks from their May 2007 counterparts, there has been a slight keyboard update. New media control keys are now located along the function key row, the same as in the new iMac keyboards. There's no embedded keypad, and the Apple symbol is now gone from the Command key. The unit is 50g lighter – 2.25kg, as opposed to 2.3kg.

Otherwise, the new MacBooks have most of the same components as their older counterparts. All models ship with 1GB of RAM, a 13.3-inch glossy widescreen display with a 1280×800 resolution, built-in iSight camera, built-in stereo speakers and microphone, one FireWire 400 and two USB ports, 802.11n-enabled AirPort Extreme, Bluetooth, Gigabit Ethernet, Apple Remote, and the usual slate of Apple software, including the new Leopard operating system and iLife '08. The MacBook's 5400-rpm Serial ATA storage ranges from 80GB for the low-end model, to 120GB and 160GB for the mid-range and high-end models. The low-end model has a 24×

MACBOOK CORE 2 DUO/2.2GHZ (BLACK)
Consumer portable computer
♦♦♦♦½
Santa Rosa architecture; faster system bus; updated graphics chip; can handle 4GB of RAM; built-in 802.11n AirPort Extreme; excellent battery life
Integrated graphics performance limits gaming use
OS X
$ 2199
Apple Inc
Apple Australia 133 622
Jackie Dove
www.apple.com/au/macbook

slot-loading combo drive, while the high-end models both have an 8x slot-loading double-layer SuperDrive.

Performance. Tested with version 5 of Speedmark, *Macworld's* standard performance benchmark test – a new version that coincides with the release of OS X 10.5 (Leopard) – the 2.2GHz MacBooks outpaced the older 2.16GHz models by about four percent.

Gaming scores improved with the new models, reflecting their updated graphics chips. Unreal Tournament 2004 frame rates jumped from 18.5fps for the 2.16GHz white model to 25.4fps for the 2.2GHz black model. For Quake 4 test, frame rates nearly doubled from 4.5fps to 7.8fps in comparing those same models. Hard core gamers will still want to steer clear of the MacBook line, but if you play games only occasionally or you tend to play games that are only moderately graphics-processor-intensive, you'll definitely benefit.

While the new systems took the honours for most of the benchmark tests, there was a lone anomaly: The older mid-range MacBook was a smidge faster at the Photoshop CS3 test than the newer models. And the new mid-range white unit topped the new black one in the ZIP archive test. While worth noting in an academic way, in reality, these test differentials are insignificant.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you bought a Mac laptop recently, this latest MacBook upgrade will cause no reason for despair. However, if you've been awaiting the most optimal time to refresh an iBook or even an older PowerBook G4, this might be it. You'll get plenty of value for the dollar with a nice improvement in performance, without having to hassle with an OS upgrade.

New MacBook Benchmarks

	Speedmark 5	Adobe Photoshop CS3	Cinema 4D XL 10.5	Compressor 3	iMovie HD	iTunes 7.5	Unreal Tournament 2004	Quake 4	Finder
	OVERALL SCORE	SUITE	RENDER	MPEG2 Encode	Aged Effect	MP3 ENCODE	FRAME RATE	FRAME RATE	ZIP ARCHIVE
MacBook Core 2 Duo (black)/2.2GHz (black)	186	**1:17**	**1:00**	**2:05**	0:51	1:12	25.4	7.8	5:13
MacBook Core 2 Duo (white)/2.2GHz	185	**1:17**	1:01	2:11	0:53	1:11	23.3	7.7	5:09
MacBook Core 2 Duo /2GHz (November 2007)	**172**	1:27	1:06	2:22	0:57	1:16	24.1	7.7	5:42
MacBook Core 2 Duo (white)/2.16GHz	*179*	*1:16*	*1:04*	*2:17*	*0:53*	*1:13*	*18.5*	*4.5*	*5:11*
15-inch MacBook Pro Core 2 Duo/2.2GHz	185	1:24	**1:00**	2:16	0:55	1:09	**78**	43.1	5:37
15-inch MacBook Pro Core 2 Duo/2.6GHz*	208	1:14	0:51	1:57	0:47	1:02	77.8	51.3	4:47
15-inch MacBook Pro Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	198	1:17	0:55	2:07	**0:50**	**1:05**	75.4	**46.3**	**5:02**
	>Better	<Better	<Better	<Better	<Better	<Better	>Better	>Better	<Better

Best results in **bold**. Reference system in *italics*. * Denotes built-to-order model

Speedmark 5 scores are relative to those of a 1.5GHz Core Solo Mac mini, which is assigned a score of 100. Adobe Photoshop, Cinema 4D XL, iMovie, iTunes, and Finder scores are in minutes:seconds. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.5 with 2GB of RAM. The Photoshop Suite test is a set of 14 scripted tasks using a 50MB file. Photoshop's memory was set to 70 percent and History was set to Minimum. We recorded how long it took to render a scene in Cinema 4D XL. We used Compressor to encode a 6minute:26second DV file using the DVD: Fastest Encode 120 minutes - 4:3 setting. In iMovie, we applied the Aged Film effect from the Video FX. menu to a one minute movie. We converted 45 minutes of AAC audio files to MP3 using iTunes' High Quality setting. We used Unreal Tournament 2004's Antalus Botmatch average-frames-per-second score; we tested at a resolution of 1024x768 pixels at the Maximum setting with both audio and graphics enabled. We ran Quake 4 timedemo at a resolution of 1024x768 pixels at High Quality settings. We created a Zip archive in the Finder from a 2GB folder. — *Macworld Lab testing by James Galbraith, Jerry Jung, And Brian Chen*

CANON SELPHY CP740 PHOTO PRINTER	
Type	Dye-sub photo printer
Rating	❦❦❦
Pros	Pros Dye-sub printing produces continuous tones and colors; includes retractable USB cable
Cons	Paper type for 4-by-6-inch prints limited to Canon postcards; lacks advanced image-editing features; dark prints appear flat; less intuitive operation than comparable printers
SRP	$150
Manufacturer	Canon
Distributor	Canon Australia 02 9805 2000
Reviewer	Brian Chen
Hot links	www.canon.com.au

Canon Selphy CP740 photo printer

Offers decent photos but is otherwise limited

THE Canon Selphy CP740 is a compact photo printer that employs dye-sublimation, a printing process that uses heat to transfer images onto printable surfaces.

Though the CP740 is advertised as a compact photo printer, the only 4×6-inch photo paper that Canon sells for it is postcard paper. Therefore, the back of each photo you print will have lines to write on and a box to place a stamp. I found this frustrating because the CP740's print quality is mostly pleasing, and I would want to print more than just postcards with it.

Design and interface. Loading the input tray could take some time to get used to if you're accustomed to using ink-jet printers: instead of simply lining up paper in a vertical tray, you must place paper in a small, covered tray, open the tray's lid at an angle, and shove the tray into the paper feeder. This process sounds complicated, though the CP740's included instruction manual should walk you through it just fine; but the idea that you'd have to read the manual to figure out how to load the paper may rightly give some people pause.

You won't find many print customisation options on the CP740. There's a date button giving you the option to print dates on your photos, a layout button that lets you choose between borderless or bordered printing, and a Mode button with which you can choose whether to print a single photo, multiple copies of a photo, or all of the photos on your memory card.

In addition to the aforementioned options, there's a Display button that gives you a larger preview of your photo, a red-eye removal button, and, of course, the Power and Print buttons. Disappointingly, there are no options to print in black and white or crop your photos – features you'll find on the majority of compact ink-jet photo printers. There are also no options to choose between different print qualities or papers.

Overall, the printer's limited paper type, flat-looking dark images, and lack of advanced editing features may steer you toward the newer ink-jet compact models, which offer more flexible printing options.

The CP740 is compatible with most memory cards: CompactFlash, MicroDrive, Memory Stick, MultiMediaCard, Secure Digital cards, miniSD, and SDHC, among others. The CP740 also includes a built-in, retractable USB cable, which can be plugged in to PictBridge-compatible cameras, allowing you to print your photos from your camera.

Dye-sub features. There are upsides and downsides to the CP740's dye-sub print quality. An upside is that dye-sub prints look a bit more real: since the printing process doesn't leave ink dots, photos look more natural, with consistent tone and colour. The downside to sub-based printing is the lack of black ink. The CP740 uses a CMYO ink ribbon; that stands for cyan, magenta, yellow, and overcoating, a laminate that protects the photo from discoloration. The CP740, like most dye-sub printers, mixes cyan, magenta, and yellow to simulate black. As a result, in my test prints, shadows were lacking in detail and dark prints looked slightly flat. I preferred the photos printed using the Epson PictureMate Zoom.

Performance. When you print a photo with the CP740, you'll see the printer roll a sheet of photo paper in and out of a slot until each colour is individually transferred and combined to produce the complete picture. This may sound like a lengthy process, but the CP740 turns in surprisingly fast print speeds comparable to the ink-jet compact photo printers we've tested. The CP740 took 1 minute and 15 seconds to print a single 4×6-inch photo; by way of comparison, an HP Photosmart A826 ink-jet compact photo printer takes 1 minute and 29 seconds to complete the same task.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The Selphy CP740 prints decent 4x6-inch photos, but overall its irksome limitations outweigh its benefits. Canon's decision to continue giving consumers the option to choose between ink-jet and dye-sub printers is admirable, but the CP740's imperfect dark prints, and its lack of paper type and image modification options, should compel you to follow the ink-jet compact photo printer route.

Ai-Phone U-401M

What a difference an A makes

The iPhone is clearly the "it" gadget at the moment. The only problem with it is that, for us in Australia at least, there's no easy way to get one.

It is, however, easy to get your hands on an Ai-Phone. Released before Apple's similarly-named model, the Ai-Phone is a USB phone designed for use with Skype and compatible with other VoIP applications and voice-capable messaging applications such as iChat.

You install the software, plug in the phone, and start Skype. Use the arrow keys on the phone to select a Skype contact, hit the green key and you're chatting.

And why would you do this? Well, not everyone is happy wearing a bulky headset to make VoIP calls. Some of us want a VoIP experience that's just like using an actual phone. There are a number of such devices on the market, and the Ai-Phone is the best-looking of them.

AI-PHONE U-401M	
Type	USB phone for Skype
Rating	4½
Pros	Slim and stylish; makes VoIP calls seem less unfamiliar
Cons	Lack of positive feedback from the keypad; hard to read some keys
OS X	10.3 or later
SRP	$80
Manufacturer	Kanzen
Distributor	Kanzen International
Reviewer	Matthew JC. Powell
Hot links	www.kanzenint.com

Minor quibbles. The Ai-Phone works perfectly well under Panther and Tiger, but under Leopard the green "dial" key behaves erratically. And because the keys are raised plastic bubbles rather than actual keys, it can seem like you just haven't managed to press properly. The dark grey on black keypad is also tricky to read in some light.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. It isn't an iPhone, but it's slim and black with a shiny metal back. Plus the calls are free.

	PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-L10
Type	Digital SLR
Rating	♦♦♦♦½
Pros	Live View feature; easy to hold
Cons	Each lens has to be stabilised
SRP	$2199 (inc kit lens)
Publisher	Panasonic
Distributor	Panasonic Australia
Reviewer	Barrie Smith
Hot links	www.panasonic.com.au

Panasonic Lumix DMC-L10

Great pics in anyone's hands

WHEN Panasonic launched its first DSLR it was priced at nearly $4000. Reason has now entered the picture as the follow-up model hits the shelves at a little more than half that figure. And a fascinating camera the L10 is too.

Using the 4/3 system the camera can accept lenses made by Leica, Olympus and Sigma. The image sensor is approximately 4/3 of an inch in the diagonal with an actual imaging area of 17.3x13mm.

The big bonus when you buy the L10 camera/lens kit is you get a Japanese-made, Leica-designed Vario-Elmar f3.8-5.6/14-50 mm, 3.6x zoom as your first lens. With Panasonic DSLRs each lens must be optically stabilised, differing from Olympus and Sony who rely on an internal body system to handle the image steadying.

Growing in popularity is a feature that gives you a Live View of your shot on the rear, rotating 6.4cm LCD screen before firing the shutter button. I'm quite happy with the optical reflex viewfinder – it does guarantee accurate focus indication – but many will appreciate the electronic picture.

The camera uses a Live MOS sensor which captures a 10.1 megapixel image, maxing out to a 3648x2736 pixel image – enough to make 31x23 cm prints at 300 dpi.

Exposure options include auto, Program AE, shutter or aperture priority and manual. Metering choices: multi zone, centre-weighted and spot.

An unlikely feature for a DSLR with pro ambitions, the L10 has a face detection feature that throws an outline onto the LCD if a face occupies the scene and maximises focus and exposure. Outside this, the L10 offers five other auto focus options: from spot focus to a nine point array.

The inbuilt flash can handle snapshot type photography and reach out to 4.4m with an ISO 200 setting; you can also access first and second shutter curtain sync for special lighting effects.

The L10 captures in RAW or JPEG or RAW+JPEG; it has a burst mode of 3fps; ISO sensitivity runs to 1600; 1920x1080 pixel capture option for HD TV viewing; sensor dust reduction is activated each time camera is powered on; SD/SDHC memory cards are used.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The L10 delivered some first class images. If you're ready to make the move from serious hobbyist to semi-pro, it rates a look.

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Ricoh Caplio R7

More than meets the eye

THERE are some enticing buys in compact digicams. Ricoh's Caplio R7 is enticingly slim, highly pocketable and yet has the ability to capture 8.15 megapixel images that can print out to a large 28x21cm print at 300 dpi.

Another attraction is a zoom lens of 7.1x in optical zoom power, equivalent to a 28-200 mm lens for a 35 SLR camera; the only downside is that the lens uses digi-

tal stabilising and not the preferred optical steadying approach. Viewing is via a 6.9cm rear LCD screen – there is no optical finder.

You have only an auto exposure option but there are three variations in the metering process: correct exposure can be determined from multi-zone areas, centre-weighted or spot. There are 11 scene modes that aid the capture of nightscapes, sports, text documents and other tricky subjects. There's also a face detection mode, to maximise exposure and focus in shots with up to four faces.

Autofocus can be determined in a number of modes, including multi zone or spot focus as well as the ability to set focus manually.

A useful feature is a touch up mode that lets you "fix" a shot post-shoot, before downloading: you can alter the brightness and contrast; adjust the skew of an image with leaning verticals; the colour toning option lets you lift or lower the red or blue levels of an image. Once corrected, the picture is saved as a new image.

On the camera there is a useful shortcut in the shape of an ADJ (for adjust) button that, once pressed, gives you direct access to any of three presets that control exposure correction, white balance and ISO setting.

For a compact camera the inbuilt flash is unusual in that it offers a "soft flash" setting that reduces flash output when you're shooting macro shots. This is even more useful when you learn that the camera can be used as close to a subject as 1cm – at such a close distance flash over-exposure is a very real problem.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Picture quality is above average. If colour – the camera not the pictures! – could affect your buying choice, the R7 is available in black, silver and metallic burnt orange.

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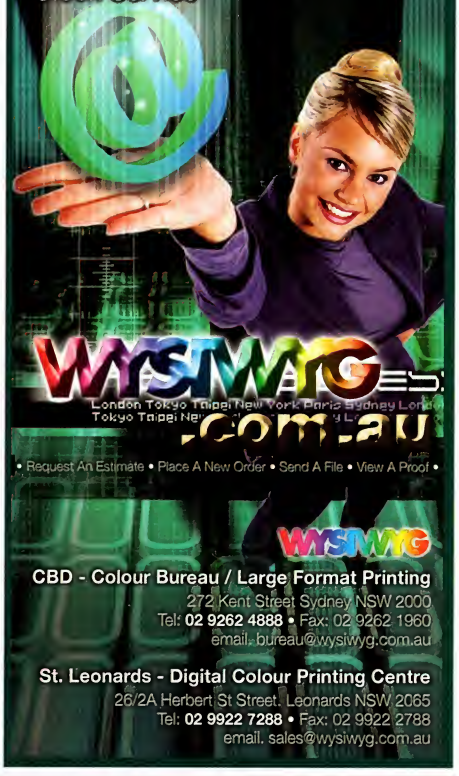

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Alex Kidman is waiting patiently for Oscar the Grouch to pop out of the Trash can.

Are you sure?

Has Leopard been declawed?

YOU may well be sick of reading about Leopard. Perhaps you're happy with your existing OS iteration, or waiting for the next model refresh, or just plain over it. A curious factoid here: if you go back through this month's issue and count up every instance of the word "Leopard" (including the advertisements), then divide by 42 (you know why), then you'll discover something astounding — namely that you've just wasted an hour of your life.

Chances are, though, that you're still keenly interested and perhaps, like me, you jumped head-first into the whole Leopard experience. Quick disclosure time: Apple sent me a copy of Leopard for evaluation; I did not pay for it. For some reason — perhaps they're wary of us journalist types, or were wary of advance publicity for some insane reason — it wasn't until the Monday after it was released that they shipped them out to journalists. Still, not looking gift OSes in the mouth, and all that.

Anyway, a quick Monday install — I never could resist an upgrade — still put me firmly in the "early adopter" camp, at least for the full version of Leopard not coming from a grubby BitTorrent site. Early adopters of any technology usually pay a price. For most hardware, it's usually in cold, hard cash. For software (and especially operating systems), it's almost invariably in time, frustration, and intermittent chunks of hair torn out in frustration. In my case, there's not that much hair left to imperil, which should give you a good picture of how well I normally get on with software. The esteemed editor of this magazine clearly leads a comparatively stress-free life. I must learn his secret, and fast.

Now for the most part, my transition to Leopard went quite smoothly. It's the second fastest operating system I've ever installed — booting from an Amiga Kickstart 1.3 floppy was quicker, although hardly relevant these days — and most of my settings survived unscathed. I'm a picky type who's more interested in processing cycles and what they can do for me than shiny eye candy, so things like the scrolling starfield in Time Machine or the 3D dock don't entice me. I can't say that Leopard is honestly any faster on my system, but it's not noticeably slower either.

What it is, in some important respects, is broken. Here's my quick personal shopping list of complaints

- FileMaker Pro not working outside the US. Yeah, I know, Apple and FileMaker are meant to be "separate" companies, with no special favours given to the FM people. And indeed, about four days later, a patch came out — apparently an early release of a scheduled service pack — at a hefty 350MB. Perhaps it's just me, but 350MB to fix a language preference problem seems a little on the weighty side. I can't be the only one who recalls when 350MB wasn't a patch, or even a program file — it was the combined hard drive capacity of everyone you knew, plus about 325MB besides.
- Preview's image colour controls not working properly. Adjust the colour anywhere, go to save, and Preview crashes. Sure, it saves me time in not mucking about with picture colour settings, but quite how this bug made it out of Infinite Loop befuddles me.
- Hardware not working. This is a two-way street — vendors do share some culpability in creating drivers for new operating systems, and twelve months on I still have plenty of hardware for that other operating system™ that still awaits new drivers. I'm at a loss to work out why a network printer (in this case, a Lexmark X342n) that was happy to run under Tiger runs in fear from Leopard. A whole lot of messing around with CUPS configuration has yielded no results — not even a generic Postscript driver can save me, it seems.

Now, there's a peril in writing about what doesn't work in any application, in that Apple can always come along and fix it. Indeed, as I type this, Software Update is bouncing furiously at me with an update patch. Hopefully it'll fix my woes. If you'll just excuse me for a second, I have to go and reboot.

Ah, that's better. Well, maybe. All of my problems are still there, although some of them now have different error codes. Is that progress?

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